



Cabeza de Vaca

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ORIGINAL NARRATIVES OF EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

**SPANISH EXPLORERS IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES
1528-1543**

THE NARRATIVE OF ALVAR NUÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA

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INTRODUCTION - THE NARRATIVE OF CABEZA DE VACA

Relation that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca gave of what befell the armament in the Indies whither Pánfilo de Narváez went for Governor from the year 1527 to the year 1536 [1537] when with three comrades he returned and came to Sevilla.

PROEM - Caesarian Catholic Majesty:

Among the many who have held sway, I think no prince can be found whose service has been attended with the ardor and emulation shown for that of your Highness at this time. The inducement is evident and powerful: men do not pursue together the same career without motive, and strangers are observed to strive with those who are equally impelled by religion and loyalty.

Although ambition and love of action are common to all, as to the advantages that each may gain, there are great inequalities of fortune, the result not of conduct, but only accident, nor caused by the fault of any one, but coming in the providence of man's will. Hence to one arises deeds more signal than he thought to achieve; to another the opposite in every way occurs, so that he can show no higher proof of purpose than his effort, and at times even this is so concealed that it cannot of itself appear.

As for me, I can say in undertaking the march I made on the main by the royal authority, I firmly trusted that my conduct and services would be as evident and distinguished as were those of my ancestors and that I should not have to speak in order to be reckoned among those who for diligence and fidelity in affairs your Majesty honors.

CHAPTER 1

In which is told when the Armada sailed, and of the officers and persons who went in it.

On the seventeenth day of June, in the year fifteen hundred and twenty-seven, the Governor Pánphilo de Narváez left the port of San Lúcar de Barameda, authorized and commanded by *your Majesty* to conquer and govern the provinces of the main, extending from the River Palmas to the cape of Florida. The fleet he took was five ships, in which went six hundred men, a few more or less; the officers (for we shall have to speak of them), were these, with their rank: Cabeza de Vaca, treasurer and high-sheriff; Alonso Enríquez, comptroller; Alonso de Solís, distributor to your Majesty and assessor; Juan Xuarez, a friar of Saint Francis, commissary, and four more friars of the same order.

(Note) *Charles V (24 February 1500 – 21 September 1558) was Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria from 1519 to 1556, King of Spain (Castile and Aragon) as Charles I from 1516 to 1556, and Lord of the Netherlands and titular Duke of Burgundy as Charles II from 1506 to 1555. As he was head of the rising House of Habsburg during the first half of the 16th century, his dominions in Europe included the Catholic Roman Empire, extending from Germany to northern Italy with direct rule over the Austrian hereditary lands and the Burgundian Low Countries, and the Kingdom of Spain with its southern Italian possessions of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia.*

Furthermore, he oversaw both the continuation of the long-lasting Spanish colonization of the Americas and the short-lived German colonization of the Americas. The personal union of the European and American territories of Charles V was the first collection of realms labelled "the empire on which the sun never sets".

We arrived at the island of Santo Domingo (Hispaniola), where we tarried near forty-five days, engaged in procuring for ourselves some necessary material, particularly horses. Here we lost from our fleet more than one hundred and forty men, who wished to remain, seduced by the partidos, and advantages held out to them by the people of that country.

(Note) *They spent forty-five days on the island re-provisioning the fleet and constructing a sixth ship. They were especially anxious to acquire horses, but there was a shortage of them in Hispaniola, so the expedition continued to Cuba, where they hoped to recruit more men and buy horses.*



Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa

We sailed from the island and arrived at Santiago, a port of Cuba, where, during some days that we remained, the Governor supplied himself further with men, also with arms and horses. It happened there that a gentleman, Vasco Porcallo of Trinidad, which is also on the island, offered to give the Governor some provisions which he had in the town, a hundred leagues from the port of Santiago. Accordingly the Governor set out with all the fleet for Trinidad; but coming to a port half way, called Cabo de Santa Cruz, he thought it well to wait there, and send a vessel to bring the stores. To this end he ordered that a Captain Pantoja should go for them with his ship, and for greater security, that I should accompany him with another. The Governor remained with four ships, having bought one at the island of Santo Domingo.

We having arrived with the two vessels at the port of Trinidad, Captain Pantoja went with Vasco Porcallo to the town, a league off, to receive the provisions, while I remained at sea with the pilots, who said we ought to go thence with the greatest despatch possible, for it was a very bad port in which many vessels were lost. What there occurred to us was very remarkable. It appears to me not foreign to the purpose with which I write this, to relate it here.

The next morning began to give signs of bad weather; rain commenced falling, and the sea ran so high, that, although I gave the men permission to go on shore, many of them returned to the ship to avoid exposure to the wet and cold, and because the town was a league away. In this time a canoe came off, bringing me a letter from a resident of the place, asking me to come for the needed provisions that were there; from which request I excused myself, saying that I could not leave the ships. At noon the canoe returned with another letter, in which I was solicited again with much urging, and a horse was brought for me to ride.

I gave the same answer as before, that I could not leave the ships; but the pilots and the people entreated me to go, so that I might hasten the provisions as fast as possible, and we might join the fleet where it lay, for they had great fear lest remaining long in this port, the ships should be lost.

For these reasons, I determined to go to the town; but first I left orders with the pilots, that if the south wind, which often wrecks vessels there, came on to blow, and they should find themselves in much danger, to put the ships on shore at some place where the men and horses could be saved. I wished to take some of the men with me for company; but they said the weather was too rainy and cold, and the town too far off; that to-morrow, which was Sunday, they would come and hear mass.

An hour after I left, the sea began to rise very high, and the north wind was so violent that neither the boats dared come to land, nor could the vessels be let drive on shore, because of the head wind, so that the people remained severely laboring against the adverse weather, and under a heavy fall of water all that day and Sunday until dark.

At this time, the rain and the tempest had increased to such a degree, there was no less agitation in the town than on the sea; for all the houses and churches fell, and it was necessary in order to move upright, that we should go seven or eight holding on to each other that the wind might not blow us away; and walking in the groves, we had no less fear of the trees than of the houses, as they too were falling and might kill us under them. In this tempest and danger we wandered all night, without finding place or spot where we could remain a half-hour in safety.

During the time, particularly from midnight forward, we heard much tumult and great clamor of voices, the sound of timbrels, flutes, and tambourines, as well as other instruments, which lasted until the morning, when the tempest ceased. Nothing so terrible as this storm had been seen in those parts before. I drew up an authenticated account of it, and sent the testimony to your Majesty.

On Monday morning we went down to the harbor, but did not find the ships. The buoys belonging to them were floating on the water; whence we knew the ships were lost, and we walked along the shore to see if any thing could be found of them. As nothing was discovered, we struck into the woods, and, having travelled about a quarter of a league in water, we found the little boat of a ship lodged upon some trees. Ten leagues thence, along the coast, two bodies were found, belonging to my ship, and some lids of boxes; but the persons were so disfigured by beating against the rocks that they could not be recognized. A cloak too was seen, also a coverlet rent in pieces, and nothing more. Sixty persons were lost in the ships, and twenty horses. Those who had gone on shore the day of our arrival, who may have been as many as thirty, were all the survivors of both ships. During some days we were struggling with much hardship and hunger; for the provisions and subsistence were destroyed, and some herds. The country was left in a condition piteous to behold; the trees prostrate, the woods parched, there being neither grass nor leaf.

Thus we lived until the fifth of November, when the Governor arrived with four ships, which had lived through the great storm, having run into a place of safety in good time. The people who came in them, as well as those on shore, were so intimidated by what had passed, that they feared to go on board in the winter, and they besought the Governor to spend it there. Seeing their desire and that it was also the wish of the townspeople, he staid through the season. He gave the ships and people into my charge, that I might go with them to pass the winter at the port of Xagua, twelve leagues thence, where I remained until the twentieth day of February.



Port of Xagua, south coast of Cuba

CHAPTER 2

The coming of the Governor to the Port of Xagua and with a pilot.

At this time, the Governor arrived with a brigantine bought in Trinidad, and brought with him a pilot named Miruelo, who was employed because he said he knew the position of the River Palmas, and had been there, and was a thorough pilot for all the coast of the North. The Governor had also purchased and left on the shore of Havana another vessel, of which Alvaro de la Cerda remained in charge, with forty infantry and twelve cavalry.

The second day after arrival the Governor set sail with four hundred men and eighty horses, in four ships and a brigantine. The pilot being again on board, put the vessels among the shoals they call Canarreo, and on the day following we struck: thus we were situated fifteen days, the keels of our vessels frequently touching bottom.

At the end of this time, a tempest from the south threw so much water upon the shoals that we could get off, although not without danger. We left this place and arrived at Guaniguanico, where another storm overtook us, in which we were at one time near being lost. At Cape Corrientes we had still another, which detained us three days. These places being passed, we doubled Cape Sant Anton, and sailed with head winds until we were within twelve leagues of Havana.

Standing in the next day to enter the harbor, a wind came from the south which drove us from the land towards the coast of Florida. We came in sight on Tuesday, the twelfth day of April, and sailed along the coast. On Holy Thursday we anchored near the shore in the mouth of a bay at the head of which we saw some houses or habitations of Indians.

(Note) *While Cabeza de Vaca watched over the ships and crew, Narváez remained on shore to find replacements for the lost ships and hire more men. In February 1528, he returned to the Bay of Jagua with one additional ship and another one waiting for them in Havana. They resumed their expedition to La Florida with the intention of first stopping in Havana to pick up the final ship and more supplies.*

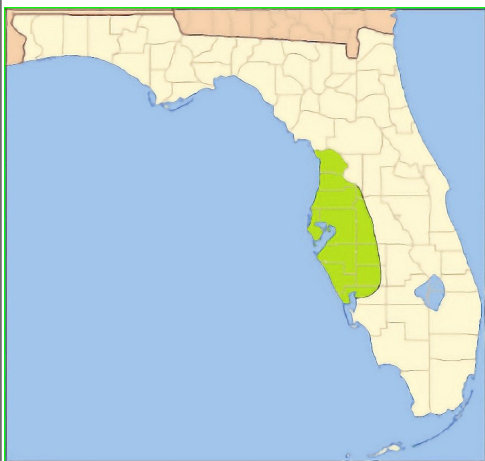
Before reaching Havana however, they were hit by another storm and blown off course into the Gulf of Mexico. Short of supplies and fresh water, they decided to push on toward Florida rather than try to get back to Cuba. In April they sighted land, anchored and went ashore. Although the location of their landing has been much debated, more recent opinion leans toward the vicinity of Tampa Bay.

CHAPTER 3

Our arrival in Florida.

On the same day the comptroller, Alonzo Enrriquez, landed on an island in the bay. He called to the Indians, who came and remained with him some time; and in barter gave him fish and several pieces of venison. The day following, which was Good Friday, the governor debarked with as many of the people as the boats he brought could contain. When we came to the *buhíos*, or houses that we had seen, we found them vacant and abandoned, the inhabitants having fled at night in their canoes. One of the *buhíos* was very large; it could hold more than three hundred persons. The others were smaller. We found a tinklet of gold among some fish nets.

The next day the Governor raised ensigns for your Majesty, and took possession of the country in your royal name. He made known his authority, and was obeyed as governor, as your Majesty had commanded. At the same time we laid our commissions before him, and he acknowledged them according to their tenor. Then he ordered that the rest of the people and the horses should land. Of the beasts there were only forty-two; by reason of the great storms and the length of time passed at sea, the rest were dead. These few remaining were so lean and fatigued that for the time we could have little service from them. The following day the Indians of the town came and spoke to us; but as we had no interpreter we could not understand what they meant. They made many signs and menaces, and appeared to say we must go away from the country. With this they left us and went off, offering no interruption.



(Note) *These Indians were part of the Safety Harbor Culture. The Safety Harbor culture was an archaeological culture practiced by Native Americans living on the central Gulf coast of the Florida peninsula, from about 900 CE until after 1700. An archaeological culture is a recurring assemblage of types of artifacts, buildings and monuments from a specific period and region that may constitute the material culture remains of a particular past human society.*

Safety Harbor archaeological culture *area*

The Safety Harbor Site is the probable location of the chief town of the Tocobaga, the best known of the groups practicing the Safety Harbor culture.

CHAPTER 4

Our entrance into the country.

The day following, the Governor resolved to make an incursion to explore the land, and see what it might contain. With him went the commissary, the assessor, and myself, with forty men, among them six cavalry, of which we could make little use. We took our way towards the north, until the hour of vespers, when we arrived at a very large bay that appeared to stretch far inland. We remained there that night, and the next day we returned to the place where were our ships and people. The Governor ordered that the brigantine should sail along the coast of Florida and search for the harbor that Miruelo, the pilot, said he knew (though as yet he had failed to find it, and could not tell in what place we were, or where was the port), and that if it were not found, she should steer for Havana and seek the ship of which Alvaro de la Cerda was in command, and, taking provisions, together, they should come to look for us.

After the brigantine left, the same party, with some persons more, returned to enter the land. We kept along the shores of the bay we had found, and, having gone four leagues, we captured four Indians. We showed them maize, to see if they had knowledge of it, for up to that time we had seen no indication of any. They said they could take us where there was some; so they brought us to their town near by, at the head of the bay, and showed us a little corn not yet fit for gathering.

There we saw many cases, such as are used to contain the merchandise of Castile, in each of them a dead man, and the bodies were covered with painted deer-skins. This appeared to the commissary to be a kind of idolatry, and he burned the cases with the bodies. We also found pieces of linen and of woollen cloth, and bunches of feathers which appeared like those of New Spain. There were likewise traces of gold. Having by signs asked the Indians whence these things came, they motioned to us that very far from there, was a province called Apalachen, where was much gold, and so the same abundance in Palachen of everything that we at all cared for.

(Note) *Cabeza de Vaca later noted that whenever Narváez expressed interest in something, the Indians assured him it could be found in great quantities at Apalachee. As a result, Narváez was determined to lead a force north into the interior to find this rich country.*

Taking these Indians for guides, we departed, and travelling ten or twelve leagues we came to a town of fifteen houses. Here a large piece of ground was cultivated in maize then ripe, and we likewise found some already dry. After staying there two days, we returned to where the comptroller tarried with the

men and ships, and related to him and the pilots what we had seen, and the information the natives had given.

The next day, the first of May, the Governor called aside the commissary, the comptroller, the assessor, myself, a sailor named Bartolomé Fernandez, and a notary, Hieronymo Alaniz. Being together he said that he desired to penetrate the interior, and that the ships ought to go along the coast until they should come to the port which the pilots believed was very near on the way to the River Palmas. He asked us for our views.

I said it appeared to me that under no circumstances ought we to leave the vessels until they were in a secure and peopled harbor; that he should observe the pilots were not confident, and did not agree in any particular, neither did they know where we were; that, more than this, the horses were in no condition to serve us in such exigencies as might occur.

Above all, that we were going without being able to communicate with the Indians by use of speech and without an interpreter, and we could but poorly understand ourselves with them, or learn what we desired to know of the land; that we were about entering a country of which we had no account, and had no knowledge of its character, of what there was in it, or by what people inhabited, neither did we know in what part of it we were; and beside all this, we had not food to sustain us in wandering we knew not whither; that with regard to the stores in the ships, rations could not be given to each man for such a journey, more than a pound of biscuit and another of bacon; that my opinion was, we should embark and seek a harbor and a soil better than this to occupy, since what we had seen of it was desert and poor, such as had never before been discovered in those parts.

To the commissary every thing appeared otherwise. He thought we ought not to embark; but that, always keeping the coast, we should go in search of the harbor, which the pilots stated was only ten or fifteen leagues from there, on the way to Pánuco; and that it was not possible, marching ever by the shore, we should fail to come upon it, because they said it stretched up into the land a dozen leagues; that whichever might first find it should wait for the other; that to embark would be to brave the Almighty after so many adversities encountered since leaving Spain, so many storms, and so great losses of men and ships sustained before reaching there; that for these reasons we should march along the coast until we reached the harbor, and those in the ships should take a like direction until they arrived at the same place.

This plan seemed the best to adopt, to the rest who were present, except the notary, who said that when the ships should be abandoned they ought to be in a known, safe haven, a place with inhabitants; that this done the Governor might advance inland and do what might seem to him proper.

The Governor followed his own judgment and the counsel of others. Seeing his determination, I required him in behalf of your Majesty, not to quit the ships before putting them in port and making them secure; and accordingly I asked a certificate of this under the hand of the notary.

The Governor responded that he did but abide by the judgment of the commissary, and of the majority of the officers, and that I had no right to make these requirements of him. He then asked the notary to give him a certificate, that inasmuch as there was no subsistence in that country for the maintenance of a colony, nor haven for the ships, he broke up the settlement he had placed there, taking its inhabitants in quest of a port and land that should be better. He then ordered the people who were to go with him to be mustered, that they might be victualled with what was needed for the journey.

After they had been provided for, he said to me, in the hearing of those present, that since I so much discouraged and feared entering the land, I should sail in charge of the ships and people in them, and form a settlement, should I arrive at the port before him; but from this proposal I excused myself.

After we had separated, the same evening, having said that it did not appear to him that he could entrust the command to any one else, he sent to me to say that he begged I would take it; but finding, notwithstanding he so greatly importuned me, that I still refused, he asked me the cause of my reluctance. I answered that I rejected the responsibility.

I felt certain and knew that he was never more to find the ships, nor the ships him, which might be foreseen in the slender outfit we had for entering the country; that I desired rather to expose myself to the danger which he and the others adventured, and to pass with them what he and they might go through, than to take charge of the ships and give occasion for it to be said I had opposed the invasion and remained behind from timidity, and thus my courage be called in question.

I chose rather to risk my life than put my honor in such position. Seeing that what he said to me availed nothing, he begged many persons to reason with me on the subject and entreat me. I answered them in the same way I had him; so he appointed for his lieutenant of the ships an alcalde he had brought with him, whose name was Caravallo.

CHAPTER 5

The Governor leaves the ships.

On Saturday, first of May, the date of this occurrence, the Governor ordered to each man going with him, two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon; and thus victualled we took up our march into the country. The whole number of men was three hundred: among them went the commissary, Friar Juan Xuarez, and another friar, Juan de Palos, three clergymen and the officers. We of the mounted men consisted of forty. We travelled on the allowance we had received fifteen days, without finding any other thing to eat than palm-tos, which are like those of Andalusia. In all that time we saw not an Indian, and found neither village nor house. Finally we came to a river, which we passed with great difficulty, by swimming and on rafts. It detained us a day to cross because of the very strong current.

(Note) *The Withlacoochee River or Crooked River is a river in central Florida, in the United States. It originates in the Green Swamp, east of Polk City, flowing west, then north, then northwest and finally west again before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico near Yankeetown. The river is 141 miles (227 km) long. It is believed to have been named after the Withlacoochee River in the northern part of the state, near the border with Georgia.*

Arrived on the other side, there appeared as many as two hundred natives, more or less. The Governor met them, and conversing by signs, they so insulted us with their gestures, that we were forced to break with them. We seized upon five or six, and they took us to their houses half a league off. Near by we found a large quantity of maize in a fit state to be gathered. We gave infinite thanks to our Lord for having succored us in this great extremity, for we were yet young in trials, and besides the weariness in which we came, we were exhausted from hunger.

On the third day after our arrival, the comptroller, the assessor, the commissary and I met, and together besought the Governor to send to look for the sea, that if possible we might find a port, as the Indians stated there was one not a very great way off. He said that we should cease to speak of the sea, for it was remote; but as I chiefly importuned him, he told me to go and look for it, and seek a harbor, to take forty men and to travel on foot. So the next day I left with Captain Alonzo del Castillo and forty men of his company. We marched until noon, when we arrived at some sea sands that appeared to lie a good ways inland. Along this sand we walked for a league and a half, with the water half way up the leg, treading on oysters, which cut our feet badly and made us much trouble, until we reached the river we had before crossed, emptying into this bay. As we could not cross it by reason of our slim outfit for such purpose, we returned to camp and reported what we had discovered.

To find out if there was a port and examine the outlet well, it was necessary to repass the river at the place where we had first gone over; so the next day the Governor ordered a captain, Valençuela by name, with sixty men and six cavalry, to cross, and following the river down to the sea, ascertain if there was a harbor. He returned after an absence of two days, and said he had explored the bay, that it was not deeper any where than to the knee, and that he found no harbor. He had seen five or six canoes of Indians passing from one shore to the other, wearing many plumes.

With this information, we left the next day, going ever in quest of Apalache, the country of which the Indians told us, having for our guides those we had taken. We travelled without seeing any natives who would venture to await our coming up with them until the seventeenth day of June, when a chief approached, borne on the back of another Indian, and covered with a painted deer-skin. A great many people attended him, some walking in advance, playing on flutes of reed. In this manner he came to where the Governor stood, and spent an hour with him. By signs we gave him to understand that we were going to Apalachen, and it appeared to us by those he made that he was an enemy to the people of Apalachen, and would go to assist us against them. We gave him beads and hawk-bells, with other articles of barter; and he having presented the Governor with the skin he wore, went back, when we followed in the road he took.

That night we came to a wide and deep river with a very rapid current. As we would not venture to cross on rafts, we made a canoe for the purpose, and spent a day in getting over. Had the Indians desired to oppose us, they could well have disputed our passage; for even with their help we had great difficulty in making it. One of the mounted men, Juan Velazquez by name, a native of Cuellar, impatient of detention, entered the river, when the violence of the current casting him from his horse, he grasped the reins of the bridle, and both were drowned. The people of that chief, whose name was Dulchanchellin, found the body of the beast; and having told us about where in the stream below we should find the corpse, it was sought for. This death caused us much regret, for until now not a man had been lost. The horse afforded supper to many that night.

Leaving that spot, the next day we arrived at the town of the chief, where he sent us maize. During the night one of our men was shot at in a place where we got water, but he was not hit. The next day we departed, not one of the natives making his appearance, as all had fled. While going on our way a number came in sight, prepared for battle; and though we called to them, they would not return nor await our arrival, but retired following us on the road. The Governor left some cavalry in ambush, which sallying as the natives were about to pass, seized three or four, who thenceforth served as guides. They conducted us through a country very difficult to travel and wonderful to look upon.

In it are vast forests, the trees being astonishingly high. So many were fallen on the ground as to obstruct our way in such a manner that we could not advance without much going about and a considerable increase of toil. Many of the standing trees were riven from top to bottom by bolts of lightning which fall in that country of frequent storms and tempests.

We labored on through these impediments until the day after Saint John's, when we came in view of Apalachen, without the inhabitants being aware of our approach. We gave many thanks at seeing ourselves so near, believing true what had been told us of the land, and that there would be an end to our great hardships, caused as much by the length and badness of the way as by our excessive hunger.

Although we sometimes found maize, we oftener travelled seven and eight leagues without seeing any; and besides this and the great fatigue, many had galled shoulders from carrying armor on the back; and even more than these we endured. Yet, having come to the place desired, and where we had been informed were much food and gold, it appeared to us that we had already recovered in part from our sufferings and fatigue.

(Note) *The Apalachee are a Native American people who historically lived in the Florida Panhandle. They lived between the Aucilla River and Ochlockonee River, at the head of Apalachee Bay, an area known to Europeans as the Apalachee Province. They spoke a Muskogean language called Apalachee, which is now extinct.*

The Apalachee occupied the site of Velda Mound starting about 1450, but had mostly abandoned it when Spanish started settlements in the 17th century. They first encountered Spanish explorers in 1528, when the Narváez expedition arrived. Traditional tribal enemies, European diseases, and European encroachment severely reduced their population. The survivors dispersed, and over time many Apalachee integrated with other groups, particularly the Creek Confederacy, while others relocated to other Spanish territories, and some remained in what is now Louisiana. About 300 descendants in Rapides and Natchitoches parishes assert an Apalachee identity today.

CHAPTER 6

Our arrival at Apalache.

When we came in view of Apalachen, the Governor ordered that I should take nine cavalry with fifty infantry and enter the town. Accordingly the assessor and I assailed it; and having got in, we found only women and boys there, the men being absent; however these returned to its support, after a little time, while we were walking about, and began discharging arrows at us. They killed the horse of the assessor, and at last taking to flight, they left us.

We found a large quantity of maize fit for plucking, and much dry that was housed; also many deer-skins, and among them some mantelets of thread, small and poor, with which the women partially cover their persons. There were numerous mortars for cracking maize. The town consisted of forty small houses, made low, and set up in sheltered places because of the frequent storms. The material was thatch. They were surrounded by very dense woods, large groves and many bodies of fresh water, in which so many and so large trees are fallen, that they form obstructions rendering travel difficult and dangerous.



CHAPTER 7

The character of the country.

The country where we came on shore to this town and region of Apalachen is for the most part level, the ground of sand and stiff earth. Throughout are immense trees and open woods, in which are walnut, laurel, and another tree called liquid-amber, cedars, savins, evergreen oaks, pines, red-oaks, and palmitos like those of Spain. There are many lakes, great and small, over every part of it; some troublesome of fording, on account of depth and the great number of trees lying throughout them. Their beds are sand. The lakes in the country of Apalachen are much larger than those we found before coming there.

In this province are many maize fields; and the houses are scattered as are those of the Gelves. There are deer of three kinds, rabbits, hares, bears, lions, and other wild beasts. Among them we saw an animal with a pocket on its belly, in which it carries its young until they know how to seek food, and if it happen that they should be out feeding and any one come near, the mother will not run until she has gathered them in together. The country is very cold. It has fine pastures for herds. Birds are of various kinds. Geese in great numbers. Ducks, mallards, royal-ducks, fly-catchers, night-herons and partridges abound. We saw many falcons, gerfalcons, sparrow-hawks, merlins, and numerous other fowl.

Two hours after our arrival at Apalachen, the Indians who had fled from there came in peace to us, asking for their women and children, whom we released; but the detention of a cacique by the Governor produced great excitement, in consequence of which they returned for battle early the next day, and attacked us with such promptness and alacrity that they succeeded in setting fire to the houses in which we were. As we sallied they fled to the lakes near by, because of which and the large maize fields we could do them no injury, save in the single instance of one Indian, whom we killed. The day following, others came against us from a town on the opposite side of the lake, and attacked us as the first had done, escaping in the same way, except one who was also slain.

We were in the town twenty-five days, in which time we made three incursions, and found the country very thinly peopled and difficult to travel for the bad passages, the woods and lakes. We inquired of the cacique (Chief) we kept and the natives we brought with us, who were the neighbors and enemies of these Indians, as to the nature of the country, the character and condition of the inhabitants, of the food and all other matters concerning it. Each answered apart from the rest, that the largest town in all that region was Apalachen; the people beyond were less numerous and poorer, the land little occupied, and the inhabitants much scattered; that thenceforward were great

lakes, dense forests, immense deserts and solitudes. We then asked touching the region towards the south, as to the towns and subsistence in it. They said that in keeping such a direction, journeying nine days, there was a town called Aute, the inhabitants whereof had much maize, beans, and pumpkins, and being near the sea they had fish, and that those people were their friends.

In view of the poverty of the land, the unfavorable accounts of the population and of everything else we heard, the Indians making continual war upon us, wounding our people and horses at the places where they went to drink, shooting from the lakes with such safety to themselves that we could not retaliate, killing a lord of Tescuco, named Don Pedro, whom the commissary brought with him, we determined to leave that place and go in quest of the sea, and the town of Aute of which we were told.

At the termination of the twenty-five days after our arrival we departed, and on the first day got through those lakes and passages without seeing any one, and on the second day we came to a lake difficult of crossing, the water reaching to the paps, and in it were numerous logs. On reaching the middle of it we were attacked by many Indians from behind trees, who thus covered themselves that we might not get sight of them, and others were on the fallen timbers.

They drove their arrows with such effect that they wounded many men and horses, and before we got through the lake they took our guide. They now followed, endeavoring to contest the passage; but our coming out afforded no relief, nor gave us any better position; for when we wished to fight them they retired immediately into the lake, whence they continued to wound our men and beasts. The Governor, seeing this, commanded the cavalry to dismount and charge the Indians on foot. Accordingly the comptroller alighting with the rest, attacked them, when they all turned and ran into the lake at hand, and thus the passage was gained.

Some of our men were wounded in this conflict, for whom the good armor they wore did not avail. There were those this day who swore that they had seen two red oaks, each the thickness of the lower part of the leg, pierced through from side to side by arrows; and this is not so much to be wondered at, considering the power and skill with which the Indians are able to project them. I myself saw an arrow that had entered the butt of an elm to the depth of a span.

The Indians we had so far seen in Florida are all archers. They go naked, are large of body, and appear at a distance like giants. They are of admirable proportions, very spare and of great activity and strength. The bows they use are as thick as the arm, of eleven or twelve palms in length, which they will discharge at two hundred paces with so great precision that they miss nothing.

Having got through this passage, at the end of a league we arrived at another of the same character, but worse, as it was longer, being half a league in extent. This we crossed freely, without interruption from the Indians, who, as they had spent on the former occasion their store of arrows, had nought with which they dared venture to engage us. Going through a similar passage the next day, I discovered the trail of persons ahead, of which I gave notice to the Governor, who was in the rear-guard, so that though the Indians came upon us, as we were prepared they did no harm. After emerging upon the plain they followed us, and we went back on them in two directions. Two we killed, and they wounded me and two or three others. Coming to woods we could do them no more injury, nor make them further trouble.

In this manner we travelled eight days. After that occurrence we were not again beset until within a league of the place to which I have said we were going. There, while on our way, the Indians came about us without our suspicion, and fell upon the rear-guard. A hidalgo, named Avellaneda, hearing the cries of his serving boy, went back to give assistance, when he was struck by an arrow near the edge of his cuirass; and so severe was the wound, the shaft having passed almost entirely through his neck, that he presently died. The corpse was carried to Aute, where we arrived at the end of nine days' travel from Apalache. We found all the inhabitants gone and the houses burned. Maize, beans, and pumpkins were in great plenty, all beginning to be fit for gathering. Having rested two days, the Governor begged me to go and look for the sea, as the Indians said it was near; and we had before discovered it, while on the way, from a very large stream, to which we had given the name of River of the Magdalena.

Accordingly, I set out the next day after, in company with the commissary, Captain Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, seven more on horseback, and fifty on foot. We travelled until the hour of vespers, when we arrived at a road or entrance of the sea. Oysters were abundant, over which the men rejoiced, and we gave thanks that we were there. The following morning I sent twenty men to explore the coast and ascertain its direction. They returned the night after, reporting that those creeks and bays were large, and lay so far inland as made it difficult to examine them agreeably to our desires, and that the sea shore was very distant.

These tidings obtained, seeing our slender means, and condition for exploring the coast, I went back to the Governor. On our arrival we found him and many others sick. The Indians had assaulted them the night before, and because of the malady that had come upon them, they had been pushed to extremity. One of the horses had been killed. I gave a report of what I had done, and of the embarrassing nature of the country. We remained there that day.

CHAPTER 8

We go from Aute.

The next morning we left Aute, and travelled all day before coming to the place I had visited. The journey was extremely arduous. There were not horses enough to carry the sick, who went on increasing in numbers day by day, and we knew of no cure. It was piteous and painful to witness our perplexity and distress. We saw on our arrival how small were the means for advancing farther. There was not anywhere to go; and if there had been, the people were unable to move forward, the greater part being ill, and those were few who could be on duty. I cease here to relate more of this, because any one may suppose what would occur in a country so remote and malign, so destitute of all resource, whereby either to live in it or go out of it. One thing occurred, more afflicting to us than all the rest, which was, that of the persons mounted, the greater part commenced secretly to plot, hoping to secure a better fate for themselves by abandoning the Governor and the sick, who were in a state of weakness and prostration. But, as among them were many *hidalgos* (**Note** the term *hidalgo* identifies a nobleman without a hereditary title) and persons of gentle condition, they would not permit this to go on, without informing the Governor and the officers of your Majesty; and as we showed them the deformity of their purpose, and placed before them the moment when they should desert their captain, and those who were ill and feeble, and above all the disobedience to the orders of your Majesty, they determined to remain, and that whatever might happen to one should be the lot of all, without any forsaking the rest.

After the accomplishment of this, the Governor called them all to him, and of each apart he asked advice as to what he should do to get out of a country so miserable, and seek that assistance elsewhere which could not here be found, a third part of the people being very sick, and the number increasing every hour; for we regarded it as certain that we should all become so, and could pass out of it only through death, which from its coming in such a place was to us all the more terrible. These, with many other embarrassments being considered, and entertaining many plans, we coincided in one great project extremely difficult to put in operation, and that was to build vessels in which we might go away. This appeared impossible to every one; we knew not how to construct, nor were there tools, nor iron, nor forge, nor tow, nor resin, nor rigging; finally, no one thing of so many that are necessary, nor any man who had a knowledge of their manufacture; and, above all, there was nothing to eat, while building, for those who should labor. Reflecting on all this, we agreed to think of the subject with more deliberation, and the conversation dropped from that day, each going his way, hoping for divine direction.

The next day someone came saying that he could make some pipes out of wood, which with deer-skins might be made into bellows; and, as we lived in a time when anything that had the semblance of relief appeared well, we told him to set himself to work. We assented to the making of nails, saws, axes, and other tools of which there was such need, from the stirrups, spurs, cross-bows, and the other things of iron there were; and we laid out for support, while the work was going on, that we would make four entries into Aute, with all the horses and men that were able to go, and that on every third day a horse should be killed to be divided among those who labored in the work of the boats and the sick. The incursions were made with the people and horses that were available, and in them were brought back as many as four hundred fanegas of maize; but these were not got without quarrels and contentions with the Indians. We caused many palmitos to be collected for the woof or covering, twisting and preparing it for use in the place of tow for the boats.

We commenced to build on the fourth, with the only carpenter in the company, and we proceeded with so great diligence that on the twentieth day of September five boats were finished, twenty-two cubits in length, each caulked with the fibre of the palmito. We pitched them with a certain resin, made from pine trees by a Greek, named Don Theodoro; from the same husk of the palmito, and from the tails and manes of the horses we made ropes and rigging, from our shirts, sails, and from the savins growing there we made the oars that appeared to us requisite. Such was the country into which our sins had cast us, that only by very great search could we find stone for ballast and anchors, since in it all we had not seen one. We flayed the horses, taking the skin from their legs entire, and tanning them to make bottles wherein to carry water.

During this time some went gathering shell-fish in the coves and creeks of the sea, at which employment the Indians twice attacked them and killed ten men in sight of the camp, without our being able to afford succor. We found their corpses traversed from side to side with arrows; and for all some had on good armor, it did not give adequate protection or security against the nice and powerful archery of which I have spoken. According to the declaration of our pilots under oath, from the entrance to which we had given the name Bahía de la Cruz to this place, we had travelled two hundred and eighty leagues or thereabout. Over all that region we had not seen a single mountain, and had no information of any whatsoever.

Before we embarked there died more than forty men of disease and hunger, without enumerating those destroyed by the Indians. By the twenty-second of the month of September, the horses had been consumed, one only remaining; and on that day we embarked in the following order: In the boat of the Governor went forty-nine men; in another, which he gave to the comptroller and the commissary, went as many others; the third, he gave to Captain Alonzo del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes, with forty-eight men; and another he gave

to two captains, Tellez and Peñalosa, with forty-seven men. The last was given to the assessor and myself, with forty-nine men. After the provisions and clothes had been taken in, not over a span of the gunwales remained above water; and more than this, the boats were so crowded that we could not move: so much can necessity do, which drove us to hazard our lives in this manner, running into a turbulent sea, not a single one who went having a knowledge of navigation.



Emaciated on shore

CHAPTER 9

We leave the Bay of Horses.

The haven we left bears the name of Bahía de Caballos. (**Note** "*Bay of Horses*": *St. Marks Bay of Appalachee Bay.*) We passed waist deep in water through sounds without seeing any sign of the coast, and at the close of the seventh day, we came to an island near the main. (**Note** *The conditions are applicable to the mouth of St. Marks Bay, the two small islands, and the strait between them and the coast.*) My boat went first, and from her we saw Indians approaching in five canoes, which they abandoned and left in our hands, finding that we were coming after them. The other boats passed ahead, and stopped at some houses on the island, where we found many dried mullet and roes, which were a great relief in our distress. After taking these we went on, and two leagues thence, we discovered a strait the island makes with the land, which we named Sant Miguel, for having passed through it on his day. (**Note** *St. Michael's Day, September 29, 1528.*) Coming out we went to the coast, where with the canoes I had taken, we somewhat improved the boats, making waist-boards and securing them, so that the sides rose two palms above the water. This done we returned to move along the coast in the direction of the River Palmas, (**Note** *That is, in a southwesterly direction.*) our hunger and thirst continually increasing; for our scant subsistence was getting near the end, the water was out, and the bottles made from the legs of the horses having soon rotted, were useless. Sometimes we entered coves and creeks that lay far in, and found them all shallow and dangerous. Thus we journeyed along them thirty days, (**Note** Evidently the Withlacoochee, which enters the Gulf at latitude 29°.) finding occasionally Indian fishermen, a poor and miserable lot.

At the end of this time, while the want of water was great, going near the coast at night we heard the approach of a canoe, for which, so soon as it was in sight, we paused; but it would not meet us, and, although we called, it would neither come nor wait for us. As the night was dark, we did not follow, and kept on our way. When the sun rose we saw a small island, and went to it to find water; but our labor was vain, as it had none. Lying there at anchor, a heavy storm came on, that detained us six days, we not daring to go to sea; and as it was now five days since we had drunk, our thirst was so excessive that it put us to the extremity of swallowing salt water, by which some of the men became so crazed that three or four suddenly died. I state this so briefly, because I do not believe there is any necessity for particularly relating the sufferings and toils amidst which we found ourselves; since, considering the place where we were, and the little hope we had of relief, every one may conceive much of what must have passed.

Although the storm had not ceased, as our thirst increased and the water killed us, we resolved to commend ourselves to God our Lord, and adventure the peril of the sea rather than await the end which thirst made certain. Accordingly we went out by the way we had observed the canoe go the night we came.

On this day we were ourselves many times overwhelmed by the waves, and in such jeopardy that there was not one who did not suppose his death inevitable. At sunset doubling a point made by the land, we found shelter with much calm. (**Note** *Pensacola Bay. The Indians were Choctaws or a closely related tribe.*)

Many canoes came off with Indians who spoke with us and returned, not being disposed to await our arrival. They were of large stature and well formed: they had no bows and arrows. We followed them to their houses near by, at the edge of the water, and jumped on shore. Before their dwellings were many clay pitchers with water, and a large quantity of cooked fish, (**Note** *The Spaniards were still among the Timucuan tribes.*) which the chief of these territories offered to the Governor and then took him to his house. Their dwellings were made of mats, and so far as we observed, were not movable. On entering the house the cacique (Chief) gave us fish, and we gave him of the maize we brought, which the people ate in our presence.

They asked for more and received it, and the Governor presented the cacique with many trinkets. While in the house with him, at the middle hour of night, the Indians fell suddenly upon us, and on those who were very sick, scattered along the shore. (**Note** *"Killing three men." Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Spanish colonist and writer*) They also beset the house in which the Governor was, and with a stone struck him in the face. Those of our comrades present seized the cacique; but his people being near liberated him, leaving in our hands a robe of civet-marten.

These skins are the best, I think, that can be found; they have a fragrance that can be equalled by amber and musk alone, and even at a distance is strongly perceptible. We saw there other skins, but none comparable to these.

Those of us around, finding the Governor wounded, put him into his boat; and we caused others of our people to betake themselves likewise to their boats, some fifty remaining to withstand the natives. They attacked us thrice that night, and with so great impetuosity, that on each occasion they made us retire more than a stone's cast. Not one among us escaped injury: I was wounded in the face. They had not many arrows, but had they been further provided, doubtless they would have done us much harm. In the last onset, the Captains Dorantes, Peñalosa, and Tellez put themselves in ambuscade with fifteen men, and fell upon the rear in such manner that the Indians desisted and fled.

The next morning (**Note** *October 28, 1528.*) I broke up more than thirty canoes, which were serviceable for fuel in a north wind in which we were kept all day suffering severe cold, without daring to go to sea, because of the rough weather upon it. This having subsided, we again embarked, and navigated three days. As we brought little water and the vessels were few, we were reduced to the last extremity. Following our course, we entered an estuary, and being there we saw Indians approaching in a canoe. We called to them and they came.

The Governor, at whose boat they first arrived, asked for water, which they assented to give, asking for something in which they might bring it, when Dorotheo Theodoro, a Greek spoken of before, said that he wished to go with them. The Governor tried to dissuade him, and so did others, but were unable; he was determined to go whatever might betide. Accordingly he went, taking with him a negro, the natives leaving two of their number as hostages.

At night the Indians returned with the vessels empty and without the Catholics; and when those we held were spoken to by them, they tried to plunge into the sea. Being detained by the men, the Indians in the canoe thereupon fled, leaving us sorrowful and much dejected for our loss.

(**Note** *Biedma's Narrative (Publications of the Hakluyt Society, IX. 1-83, 1851) says of the De Soto expedition in 1539: "Having set out for this village [Mavila, Mauvila, Mobile], we found a large river which we supposed to be that which falls into the bay of Chuse [Pensacola Bay]; we learned that the vessels of Narvaez had arrived there in want of water, and that a Catholic named Teodoro and an Indian had remained among these Indians: at the same time they showed us a dagger which had belonged to him."*)

CHAPTER 10

The assault from the Indians.

The morning having come, many natives arrived in canoes who asked us for the two that had remained in the boat. The Governor replied that he would give up the hostages when they should bring the Spainards they had taken. With the Indians had come five or six chiefs, (**Note** "*Three or four,*" according to the Letter (Oviedo, p. 589), which also gives the number of canoes as twenty.) who appeared to us to be the most comely persons, and of more authority and condition than any we had hitherto seen, although not so large as some others of whom we have spoken. They wore the hair loose and very long, and were covered with robes of marten such as we had before taken. Some of the robes were made up after a strange fashion, with wrought ties of lion skin, making a brave show.

They entreated us to go with them, and said they would give us the Catholic hostages, water, and many other things. They continued to collect about us in canoes, attempting in them to take possession of the mouth of that entrance; in consequence, and because it was hazardous to stay near the land, we went to sea, where they remained by us until about mid-day. As they would not deliver our people, we would not give up theirs; so they began to hurl clubs at us and to throw stones with slings, making threats of shooting arrows, although we had not seen among them all more than three or four bows. While thus engaged, the wind beginning to freshen, they left us and went back.

We sailed that day until the middle of the afternoon, when my boat, which was the first, discovered a point made by the land, and against a cape opposite, passed a broad river. I cast anchor near a little island forming the point, to await the arrival of the other boats. The Governor did not choose to come up, and entered a bay near by in which were a great many islets. We came together there, and took fresh water from the sea, the stream entering it in freshet. (**Note** The Mississippi, the waters of which were now seen by white men fourteen years before the "discovery" of the stream by De Soto.) To parch some of the maize we brought with us, since we had eaten it raw for two days, we went on an island; but finding no wood we agreed to go to the river beyond the point, one league off. By no effort could we get there, so violent was the current on the way, which drove us out, while we contended and strove to gain the land.

The north wind, which came from the shore, began to blow so strongly that it forced us to sea without our being able to overcome it. We sounded half a league out, and found with thirty fathoms we could not get bottom; but we were unable to satisfy ourselves that the current was not the cause of failure. Toiling in this manner to fetch the land, we navigated three days, and at the end of this time, a little before the sun rose, we saw smoke in several places along the shore.

Attempting to reach them, we found ourselves in three fathoms of water, and in the darkness we dared not come to land; for as we had seen so many smokes, some surprise might lie in wait, and the obscurity leave us at a loss how to act. We determined therefore to stop until morning.

When day came, the boats had lost sight of each other. I found myself in thirty fathoms. Keeping my course until the hour of vespers, I observed two boats, and drawing near I found that the first I approached was that of the Governor. He asked me what I thought we should do. I told him we ought to join the boat which went in advance, and by no means to leave her; and, the three being together, we must keep on our way. He answered saying that could not be done, because the boat was far to sea and he wished to reach the shore; that if I wished to follow him, I should order the persons of my boat to take the oars and work, as it was only by strength of arm that the land could be gained.

He was advised to this course by a captain with him named Pantoja, who said that if he did not fetch land that day, in six days more they would not reach it, and in that time they must inevitably famish. Discovering his will I took my oar, and so did every one his, in my boat, to obey it. We rowed until near sunset; but the Governor having in his boat the healthiest of all the men, we could not by any means hold with or follow her. Seeing this, I asked him to give me a rope from his boat, that I might be enabled to keep up with him; but he answered me that he would do much, if they, as they were, should be able to reach the land that night. I said to him, that since he saw the feeble strength we had to follow him, and do what he ordered, he must tell me how he would that I should act.

He answered that it was no longer a time in which one should command another; but that each should do what he thought best to save his own life; that he so intended to act; and saying this, he departed with his boat. (*Note The selfishness and incompetence of Narvaez, shown throughout the narration, are here further exemplified. His life had more than once been spared through the self-sacrifice of his men, yet he now thought more of saving himself, with the aid of his hardy crew, than of lending a hand to his weakened companions.*)

As I could not follow him, I steered to the other boat at sea, which waited for me, and having come up, I found her to be the one commanded by the Captains Peñalosa and Tellez.

Thus we continued in company, eating a daily allowance of half a handful of raw maize, until the end of four days, when we lost sight of each other in a storm; and such was the weather, a wonder that we did not all go down. Because of winter and its inclemency, the many days we had suffered hunger, and the heavy beating of the waves, the people began next day to despair in such a manner that when the sun sank, all who were in my boat were fallen

one on another, so near to death that there were few among them in a state of sensibility. Of the whole number at this time not five men were on their feet; and when night came, only the master and myself were left, who could work the boat. Two hours after dark, he said to me that I must take charge of her as he was in such condition he believed he should die that night. So I took the paddle, and going after midnight to see if the master was alive he said to me he was rather better, and would take the charge until day. I declare in that hour I would more willingly have died than seen so many people before me in such condition. After the master took the direction of the boat, I lay down a little while; but without repose, for nothing at that time was farther from me than sleep. Near the dawn of day, it seemed to me I heard the tumbling of the sea; for as the coast was low, it roared loudly. Surprised at this, I called to the master, who answered me that he believed we were near the land. We sounded and found ourselves in seven fathoms. He advised that we should keep to sea until sunrise; accordingly I took an oar and pulled on the land side, until we were a league distant, when we gave her stern to the sea. Near the shore a wave took us, that knocked the boat out of water the distance of the throw of a crowbar, (**Note** *Juego de herradura, a game played with an iron bar, often a crowbar, which is grasped at the middle and cast as far as possible.*) and from the violence with which she struck, nearly all the people who were in her like dead, were roused to consciousness. Finding themselves near the shore, they began to move on hands and feet, crawling to land into some ravines. There we made fire, parched some of the maize we brought, and found rain water. From the warmth of the fire the people recovered their faculties, and began somewhat to exert themselves. The day on which we arrived was the sixth of November 1528. (**Note** This was on or near Galveston Island. Only 15 lived past that winter. They tried to repair the rafts, using what remained of their own clothes as oakum to plug holes, but they lost the rafts to a large wave.



CHAPTER 11

Of what befell Lope de Oviedo with the Indians.

After the people had eaten, I ordered Lope de Oviedo, who had more strength and was stouter than any of the rest, to go to some trees that were near by, and climbing into one of them to look about and try to gain knowledge of the country. He did as I bade, and made out that we were on an island. He saw that the land was pawed up in the manner that ground is wont to be where cattle range, whence it appeared to him that this should be a country of Spainards; and thus he reported to us. I ordered him to return and examine much more particularly, and see if there were any roads that were worn, but without going far, because there might be danger.

He went, and coming to a path, took it for the distance of half a league, and found some huts, without tenants, they having gone into the field. (**Note** *As this was the root-digging season, the word campo in the original evidently refers to the digging "grounds" in the shoal water, and not to "woods".*)

He took from these an earthen pot, a little dog, some few mullets, and returned. As it appeared to us he was gone a long time, we sent two men that they should look to see what might have happened. They met him near by, and saw that three Indians with bows and arrows (**Note** *When Hernando de Soto passed through this country eleven years later he also was met by Indians playing flutes.*) followed and were calling to him, while he, in the same way, was beckoning them on.

Thus he arrived where we were, the natives remaining a little way back, seated on the shore. Half an hour after, they were supported by one hundred other Indian bowmen, (**Note** *"Two hundred archers with holes in their ears in which were joints of cane." Oviedo, p. 590.*) who if they were not large, our fears made giants of them. They stopped near us with the first three. It were idle to think that any among us could make defence, for it would have been difficult to find six that could rise from the ground.

The assessor and I went out and called to them, and they came to us. We endeavored the best we could to encourage them and secure their favor. We gave them beads and hawk-bells, and each of them gave me an arrow, which is a pledge of friendship. They told us by signs that they would return in the morning and bring us something to eat, as at that time they had nothing.

CHAPTER 12

The Indians bring us food.

At sunrise the next day, the time the Indians appointed, they came according to their promise, and brought us a large quantity of fish with certain roots, some a little larger than walnuts, others a trifle smaller, the greater part got from under the water and with much labor. In the evening they returned and brought us more fish and roots. They sent their women and children to look at us, who went back rich with the hawk-bells and beads given them, and they came afterwards on other days, returning as before. Finding that we had provision, fish, roots, water, and other things we asked for, we determined to embark again and pursue our course. Having dug out our boat from the sand in which it was buried, it became necessary that we should strip, and go through great exertion to launch her, we being in such a state that things very much lighter sufficed to make us great labor.

Thus embarked, at the distance of two crossbow shots in the sea we shipped a wave that entirely wet us. As we were naked, and the cold was very great, the oars loosened in our hands, and the next blow the sea struck us, capsized the boat. The assessor (**Note** Alonzo de Solis.) and two others held fast to her for preservation, but it happened to be far otherwise; the boat carried them over, and they were drowned under her. As the surf near the shore was very high, a single roll of the sea threw the rest into the waves and half drowned upon the shore of the island, without our losing any more than those the boat took down.

The survivors escaped naked as they were born, with the loss of all they had; and although the whole was of little value, at that time it was worth much, as we were then in November, the cold was severe, and our bodies were so emaciated the bones might be counted with little difficulty, having become the perfect figures of death. For myself I can say that from the month of May passed, I had eaten no other thing than maize, and sometimes I found myself obliged to eat it unparched; for although the beasts were slaughtered while the boats were building, I could never eat their flesh, and I did not eat fish ten times. I state this to avoid giving excuses, and that every one may judge in what condition we were.

Besides all these misfortunes, came a north wind upon us, from which we were nearer to death than life. Looking among the brands we had used there, we found sparks from which we made great fires. And thus were we each regretting not his own fate alone, but that of his comrades about him.

At sunset, the Indians thinking that we had not gone, came to seek us and bring us food; but when they saw us thus, in a plight so different from what it was before, and so extraordinary, they were alarmed and turned back.

I went toward them and called, when they returned much frightened. I gave them to understand by signs that our boat had sunk and three of our number had been drowned. There, before them, they saw two of the departed, and we who remained were near joining them. The Indians, at sight of what had befallen us, and our state of suffering and melancholy destitution, sat down among us, and from the sorrow and pity they felt, they all began to lament so earnestly that they might have been heard at a distance, and continued so doing more than half an hour. It was strange to see these men, wild and untaught, howling like brutes over our misfortunes. It caused in me as in others, an increase of feeling and a livelier sense of our calamity. The cries having ceased, I talked with the Spainards, and said that if it appeared well to them, I would beg these Indians to take us to their houses. Some, who had been in New Spain, replied that we ought not to think of it; for if they should do so, they would sacrifice us to their idols. But seeing no better course, and that any other led to a nearer and more certain death, I disregarded what was said, and besought the Indians to take us to their dwellings.

They signified that it would give them delight, and that we should tarry a little, that they might do what we asked. Presently thirty men loaded themselves with wood and started for their houses, which were far off, (**Note** *As he does not speak of crossing water, the dwellings of these Indians were doubtless those seen by Lope de Oviedo on the island, where they lived from October until March, for the purpose of obtaining the roots from the shoal water, as well as fish and oysters.*) and we remained with the others until near night, when, holding us up, they carried us with all haste.

Because of the extreme coldness of the weather, lest any one should die or fail by the way, they caused four or five very large fires to be placed at intervals, and at each they warmed us; and when they saw that we had regained some heat and strength, they took us to the next so swiftly that they hardly let us touch our feet to the ground.

In this manner we went as far as their habitations, where we found that they had made a house for us with many fires in it. An hour after our arrival, they began to dance and hold great rejoicing, which lasted all night, although for us there was no joy, festivity nor sleep, awaiting the hour they should make us victims. In the morning they again gave us fish and roots, showing us such hospitality that we were reassured, and lost somewhat the fear of sacrifice.

(**Note** *As the number of survivors dwindled rapidly, they were enslaved for four years by various American Indian nomadic tribes of the upper Gulf Coast. The tribes to which Cabeza de Vaca was enslaved included the Hans and the Capoques, and tribes later called the Karankawa and Coahuiltecan. Only four men managed to escape: Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, and an African slave of Dorantes, Estevanico.*)

CHAPTER 13

We hear of other Spainards.

This day I saw a native with an article of traffic I knew was not one we had bestowed; and asking whence it came, I was told by signs that it had been given by men like ourselves who were behind. Hearing this I sent two Indians, and with them two Catholics to be shown those persons. They met near by, (**Note** *This would seem to indicate that Dorantes' boat was cast ashore on the same island.*) as the men were coming to look after us; for the Indians of the place where they were, gave them information concerning us.

They were Captains Andrés Dorantes and Alonzo del Castillo, with all the persons of their boat. Having come up they were surprised at seeing us in the condition we were, and very much pained at having nothing to give us, as they had brought no other clothes than what they had on.

Thus together again, they related that on the fifth day of that month, (**Note** *November, 1528. Dorantes' boat was therefore cast ashore the day before the landing of Cabeza de Vaca's party.*) their boat had capsized a league and a half from there, and they escaped without losing any thing. We all agreed to refit their [our] boat, that those of us might go in her who had vigor sufficient and disposition to do so, and the rest should remain until they became well enough to go, as they best might, along the coast until could be found a land of Spainards.

Directly as we arranged this, we set ourselves to work. Before we threw the boat out into the water, Tavera, a gentleman of our company, died; and the boat, which we thought to use, came to its end, sinking from unfitness to float.

As we were in the condition I have mentioned, the greater number of us naked, and the weather boisterous for travel, and to cross rivers and bays by swimming, and we being entirely without provisions or the means of carrying any, we yielded obedience to what necessity required, to pass the winter in the place where we were.

We also agreed that four men of the most robust should go on to Panunco, which we believed to be near, and perhaps they could give information of our remaining on that island, and of our sorrows and destitution. These men were excellent swimmers. One of them was Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese sailor and carpenter, the second was named Mendez, the third Figueroa, who was a native of Toledo, and the fourth Astudillo, a native of Çafra. They took with them an Indian of the island of Auia.

CHAPTER 14

The departure of four Spainards.

The four Spainards being gone, after a few days such cold and tempestuous weather succeeded that the Indians could not pull up roots, the cane weirs in which they took fish no longer yielded any thing, and the houses being very open, our people began to die. Five Catholics, of a mess [quartered] on the coast, came to such extremity that they ate their dead; the body of the last one only was found unconsumed. Their names were Sierra, Diego Lopez, Corral, Palacios and Gonçalo Ruiz. This produced great commotion among the Indians giving rise to so much censure that had they known it in season to have done so, doubtless they would have destroyed any survivor, and we should have found ourselves in the utmost perplexity. Finally, of eighty men who arrived in the two instances, fifteen only remained alive.

After this, the natives were visited by a disease of the bowels, of which half their number died. They conceived that we had destroyed them, (**Note** *That is, the Indians believed the Catholics to be sorcerers.*) and believing it firmly, they concerted among themselves to dispatch those of us who survived. When they were about to execute their purpose, an Indian who had charge of me, told them not to believe we were the cause of those deaths, since if we had such power we should also have averted the fatality from so many of our people, whom they had seen die without our being able to minister relief, already very few of us remaining, and none doing hurt or wrong, and that it would be better to leave us unharmed.

To this island we gave the name Malhado. (**Note** *"Misfortune," "ill-fate."*) The people (**Note** *The Capoques, or Cahoques, and the Hans.*) we found there are large and well formed; they have no other arms than bows and arrows, in the use of which they are very dexterous. The men have one of their nipples bored from side to side, and some have both, wearing a cane in each, the length of two palms and a half, and the thickness of two fingers. They have the under lip also bored, and wear in it a piece of cane the breadth of half a finger. Their women are accustomed to great toil. The stay they make on the island is from October to the end of February. Their subsistence then is the root I have spoken of, got from under the water in November and December. They have weirs of cane and take fish only in this season; afterwards they live on the roots. At the end of February, they go into other parts to seek food; for then the root is beginning to grow and is not food.

Those people love their offspring the most of any in the world, and treat them with the greatest mildness. (**Note** *This is characteristic of all Indians, who punish their children very rarely.*)

When it occurs that a son dies, the parents and kindred weep as does everybody; the wailing continuing for him a whole year. They begin before dawn every day, the parents first and after them the whole town. They do the same at noon and at sunset. After a year of mourning has passed, the rites of the dead are performed; then they wash and purify themselves from the stain of smoke. They lament all the deceased in this manner, except the aged, for whom they show no regret, as they say that their season has passed, they having no enjoyment, and that living they would occupy the earth and take aliment from the young. Their custom is to bury the dead, unless it be those among them who have been physicians. These they burn. While the fire kindles they are all dancing and making high festivity, until the bones become powder. After the lapse of a year the funeral honors are celebrated, every one taking part in them, when that dust is presented in water for the relatives to drink. (**Note** *Nevertheless these same people were so horrified by the uncanny action of the Spaniards who ate their dead companions that they sought to put them to death. It should be noted that the Attacapan and probably the Karankawan tribes of the Texas coast, to which the people of Malhado Island may have belonged, were reputed to be cannibals.*)

Every man has an acknowledged wife. The physicians are allowed more freedom: they may have two or three wives, among whom exist the greatest friendship and harmony. From the time a daughter marries, all that he who takes her to wife kills in hunting or catches in fishing, the woman brings to the house of her father, without daring to eat or take any part of it, and thence victuals are taken to the husband. From that time neither her father nor mother enters his house, nor can he enter theirs, nor the houses of their children; and if by chance they are in the direction of meeting, they turn aside, and pass the distance of a crossbow shot from each other, carrying the head low the while, the eyes cast on the ground; for they hold it improper to see or to speak to each other. (**Note** *Tabu of the mother-in-law by a young man is quite common among the Indians, but refusal to see or to speak to the wife's father is very rare.*) But the woman has liberty to converse and communicate with the parents and relatives of her husband. The custom exists from this island the distance of more than fifty leagues inland.

There is another custom, which is, when a son or brother dies, at the house where the death takes place they do not go after food for three months, but sooner famish, their relatives and neighbors providing what they eat. As in the time we were there a great number of the natives died, in most houses there was very great hunger, because of the keeping of this their custom and observance; for although they who sought after food worked hard, yet from the severity of the season they could get but little; in consequence, the Indians who kept me, left the island, and passed over in canoes to the main, into some bays where are many oysters. For three months in the year they eat nothing besides these, and drink very bad water.

CHAPTER 15

What befell us among the people of Malhado.

On an island of which I have spoken, they wished to make us physicians without examination or inquiring for diplomas. They cure by blowing upon the sick, and with that breath and the imposing of hands they cast out infirmity. They ordered that we also should do this, and be of use to them in some way. We laughed at what they did, telling them it was folly, that we knew not how to heal. In consequence, they withheld food from us until we should practise what they required. Seeing our persistence, an Indian told me I knew not what I uttered, in saying that what he knew availed nothing; for stones and other matters growing about in the fields have virtue, and that passing a pebble along the stomach would take away pain and restore health, and certainly then we who were extraordinary men must possess power and efficacy over all other things. At last, finding ourselves in great want we were constrained to obey; but without fear lest we should be blamed for any failure or success.

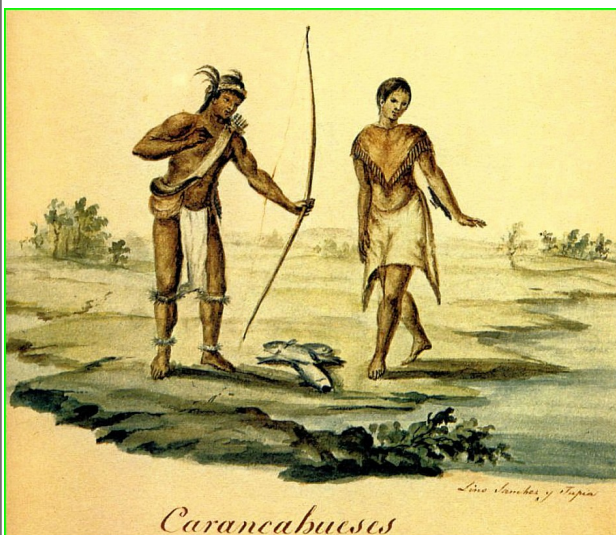
Their custom is, on finding themselves sick to send for a physician, and after he has applied the cure, they give him not only all they have, but seek among their relatives for more to give. The practitioner scarifies over the seat of pain, and then sucks about the wound. They make cauteries with fire, a remedy among them in high repute, which I have tried on myself and found benefit from it. They afterwards blow on the spot, and having finished, the patient considers that he is relieved. Our method was to bless the sick, breathing upon them, and recite a Pater-noster and an Ave-Maria, praying with all earnestness to God our Lord that he would give health and influence them to make us some good return. In his clemency he willed that all those for whom we supplicated, should tell the others that they were sound and in health, directly after we made the sign of the cross over them. For this the Indians treated us kindly; they deprived themselves of food that they might give to us, and presented us with skins and some trifles.

So protracted was the hunger we there experienced, that many times I was three days without eating. The natives also endured as much; and it appeared to me a thing impossible that life could be so prolonged, although afterwards I found myself in greater hunger and necessity, which I shall speak of farther on. The Indians who had Alonzo del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, and the others that remained alive, were of a different tongue and ancestry from these, (**Note** *These were evidently the Hans, of whom he speaks later.*) and went to the opposite shore of the main to eat oysters, where they staid until the first day of April, when they returned. The distance is two leagues in the widest part. The island is half a league in breadth and five leagues in length. The inhabitants of all this region go naked. The women alone have any part of their persons covered, and it is with a wool (**Note** *Spanish moss.*) that grows on

trees. The damsels dress themselves in deer-skin. The people are generous to each other of what they possess. They have no chief. All that are of a lineage keep together.

They speak two languages; those of one are called Capoques, those of the other, Han. (**Note** Important as it is in affording evidence of the route of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, it is not possible, with our present knowledge of the former tribes of the coast region of Texas, to identify with certainty the various Indians mentioned by the narrator. Whether the names given by him are those which the natives applied to themselves or are those given by other tribes is unknown, and as no remnant of this once considerable coast population now exists, the only hope of the ultimate determination of these Indians lies in the historical archives of Texas, Mexico, and Spain. The two languages and stocks represented on the island of Malhado—the Capoque and the Han—would seem to apply to the Karankawan and Atacapan families respectively. The Capoques (Cahoques) are seemingly identical with the Cocos who lived with the Mayayes on the coast between the Brazos and Colorado Rivers in 1778, and with the Cokés, who as late as 1850 are described as a branch of the Koronks (Karankawa). Of the Han people nothing more definite is known than that which is here recorded.)

They have a custom when they meet, or from time to time when they visit, of remaining half an hour before they speak, weeping; and, this over, he that is visited first rises and gives the other all he has, which is received, and after a little while he carries it away, and often goes without saying a word. They have other strange customs; but I have told the principal of them, and the most remarkable, that I may pass on and further relate what befell us.



**Karankawa Indians of
the Texas Gulf Coast**

Carancabueses

CHAPTER 16

The Spainards leave the island of Malhado.

After Dorantes and Castillo returned to the island, they brought together the Spainards, who were somewhat separated, and found them in all to be fourteen. As I have said, I was opposite on the main, where my Indians had taken me, and where so great sickness had come upon me, that if anything before had given me hopes of life, this were enough to have entirely bereft me of them.

When the Catholics heard of my condition, they gave an Indian the cloak of marten skins we had taken from the cacique, as before related, to pass them over to where I was that they might visit me. Twelve of them crossed; for two were so feeble that their comrades could not venture to bring them. The names of those who came were Alonzo del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, Diego Dorantes, Valdevieso, (**Note** *Diego Dorantes and Pedro de Valdivieso were cousins of Andrés Dorantes.*) Estrada, Tostado, Chaves, Gutierrez, Asturiano a clergyman, Diego de Huelva, Estevanico the black, and Benitez; and when they reached the main land, they found another, who was one of our company, named Francisco de Leon. The thirteen together followed along the coast. So soon as they had come over, my Indians informed me of it, and that Hieronymo de Alvaniz (**Note** *Called also Alaniz—the notary.*) and Lope de Oviedo remained on the island. But sickness prevented me from going with my companions or even seeing them.

I was obliged to remain with the people belonging to the island (**Note** *The Capoques.*) more than a year, and because of the hard work they put upon me and the harsh treatment, I resolved to flee from them and go to those of Charuco, who inhabit the forests and country of the main, the life I led being insupportable. Besides much other labor, I had to get out roots from below the water, and from among the cane where they grew in the ground. From this employment I had my fingers so worn that did a straw but touch them they would bleed. Many of the canes are broken, so they often tore my flesh, and I had to go in the midst of them with only the clothing on I have mentioned.

Accordingly, I put myself to contriving how I might get over to the other Indians, among whom matters turned somewhat more favorably for me. I set to trafficking, and strove to make my employment profitable in the ways I could best contrive, and by that means I got food and good treatment. The Indians would beg me to go from one quarter to another for things of which they have need; for in consequence of incessant hostilities, they cannot traverse the country, nor make many exchanges. With my merchandise and trade I went into the interior as far as I pleased, and travelled along the coast forty or fifty leagues.

The principal wares were cones and other pieces of sea-snail, conchs used for cutting, and fruit like a bean of the highest value among them, which they use as a medicine and employ in their dances and festivities. Among other matters were sea-beads. Such were what I carried into the interior; and in barter I got and brought back skins, ochre with which they rub and color the face, hard canes of which to make arrows, sinews, cement and flint for the heads, and tassels of the hair of deer that by dyeing they make red. This occupation suited me well; for the travel allowed me liberty to go where I wished, I was not obliged to work, and was not a slave.

Wherever I went I received fair treatment, and the Indians gave me to eat out of regard to my commodities. My leading object, while journeying in this business, was to find out the way by which I should go forward, and I became well known. The inhabitants were pleased when they saw me, and I had brought them what they wanted; and those who did not know me sought and desired the acquaintance, for my reputation.

The hardships that I underwent in this were long to tell, as well of peril and privation as of storms and cold. Oftentimes they overtook me alone and in the wilderness; but I came forth from them all. Because of them I avoided pursuing the business in winter, a season in which the natives themselves retire to their huts and ranches, torpid and incapable of exertion.

I was in this country nearly six years, (**Note** *From 1528 to 1533.*) alone among the Indians, and naked like them. The reason why I remained so long, was that I might take with me the Spainard, Lope de Oviedo, from the island; Alaniz, his companion, who had been left with him by Alonzo del Castillo, and by Andrés Dorantes, and the rest, died soon after their departure; and to get the survivor out from there, I went over to the island every year, and entreated him that we should go, in the best way we could contrive. He put me off every year, saying in the next coming we would start.

At last I got him off, crossing him over the bay, and over four rivers in the coast, as he could not swim. In this way we (**Note** *Alonzo Enrriquez.*) went on with some Indians, until coming to a bay a league in width, and everywhere deep. From the appearance we supposed it to be that which is called Espiritu Sancto. We met some Indians on the other side of it, coming to visit ours, who told us that beyond them were three men like us, and gave their names.

We asked for the others, and were told that they were all dead of cold and hunger; that the Indians farther on, of whom they were, for their diversion had killed Diego Dorantes, Valdevieso, and Diego de Huelva, (**Note** *These were all members of Dorantes' party who visited Cabeza de Vaca when he was ill on the mainland.*) because they left one house for another; and that other Indians, their neighbors with whom Captain Dorantes now was, had in consequence of a dream, killed Esquivel and Mendez.

(**Note** Esquivel was one of the party under Enrriquez the comptroller; Mendez was one of the good swimmers who started from the island in the hope of reaching Pánuco.) We asked how the living were situated, and they answered that they were very ill used, the boys and some of the Indian men being very idle, out of cruelty gave them many kicks, cuffs, and blows with sticks; that such was the life they led.

We desired to be informed of the country ahead, and of the subsistence: they said there was nothing to eat, and that it was thin of people, who suffered of cold, having no skins or other things to cover them. They told us also if we wished to see those three Catholics, two days from that time the Indians who had them would come to eat walnuts a league from there on the margin of that river; and that we might know what they told us of the ill usage to be true, they slapped my companion and beat him with a stick, and I was not left without my portion.

Many times they threw lumps of mud at us, and every day they put their arrows to our hearts, saying that they were inclined to kill us in the way that they had destroyed our friends. Lope Oviedo, my comrade, in fear said that he wished to go back with the women of those who had crossed the bay with us, the men having remained some distance behind. I contended strongly against his returning, and urged my objections; but in no way could I keep him. So he went back, and I remained alone with those savages. They are called Quevenes, and those with whom he returned, Deaguanes.



CHAPTER 17

The coming of Indians with Andrés Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico.

Two days after Lope de Oviedo left, the Indians who had Alonzo del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes, came to the place of which we had been told, to eat walnuts. These are ground with a kind of small grain, and this is the subsistence of the people two months in the year without any other thing; but even the nuts they do not have every season, as the tree produces in alternate years. The fruit is the size of that in Galicia; the trees are very large and numerous.

An Indian told me of the arrival of the Spainards, and that if I wished to see them I must steal away and flee to the point of a wood to which he directed me, and that as he and others, kindred of his, should pass by there to visit those Indians, they would take me with them to the spot where the Spainards were. I determined to attempt this and trust to them, as they spoke a language distinct from that of the others. I did so, and the next day they left, and found me in the place that had been pointed out, and accordingly took me with them.

When I arrived near their abode, Andrés Dorantes came out to see who it could be, for the Indians had told him that a Catholic was coming. His astonishment was great when he saw me, as they had for many a day considered me dead, and the natives had said that I was. We gave many thanks at seeing ourselves together, and this was a day to us of the greatest pleasure we had enjoyed in life. Having come to where Castillo was, they inquired of me where I was going. I told them my purpose was to reach the land of Spainards, I being then in search and pursuit of it. Andrés Dorantes said that for a long time he had entreated Castillo and Estevanico to go forward; but that they dared not venture, because they knew not how to swim, and greatly dreaded the rivers and bays they should have to cross, there being many in that country. Thus I was preserved through many trials and diseases, conducting me in the end to the fellowship of those who had abandoned me, that I might lead them over the bays and rivers that obstructed our progress. They advised me on no account to let the natives know or have a suspicion of my desire to go on, else they would destroy me; and that for success it would be necessary for me to remain quiet until the end of six months, when comes the season in which these Indians go to another part of the country to eat prickly pears. (**Note** *The fruit of the Opuntia cactus.*) People would arrive from parts farther on, bringing bows to barter and for exchange, with whom, after making our escape, we should be able to go on their return. Having consented to this course, I remained. The prickly pear is the size of a hen's egg, vermillion and black in color, and of agreeable flavor. The natives live on it three months in the year, having nothing beside.



Andrés Dorantes de Carranza (ca. 1500 – 1550s), was an early Spanish explorer in the Americas. He was one of the four last survivors of the Narváez expedition, along with Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Dorantes' slave Estevanico, and Alonso del Castillo Maldonado.

I was given as a slave to an Indian, with whom was Dorantes. He was blind of one eye, as were also his wife and sons, and likewise another who was with him; so that of a fashion they were all blind. These are called Marians; (**Note** Mariames in in the edition of 1542. These people are not identified. They were possibly of Karankawan or Coahuiltecan affinity, but there is no direct evidence of this.) Castillo was with another neighboring people, called Yguases (Iguaces).

While here the Spainards related to me how they had left the island of Malhado (Galveston), and found the boat in which the comptroller and the friars had sailed, bottom up on the seashore; and that going along crossing the rivers, which are four, very large and of rapid current, their boats (**Note** Rafts built for the purpose of crossing the streams.) were swept away and carried to sea, where four of their number were drowned; that thus they proceeded until they crossed the bay, getting over it with great difficulty, and fifteen leagues thence they came to another. By the time they reached this, they had lost two companions in the sixty leagues they travelled, and those remaining were nearly dead, in all the while having eaten nothing but crabs and rockweed. (**Note** Doubtless kelp. It was burned and from the product glass and soap were formerly manufactured. It is still a source of manufacture of carbonate of soda and iodine.) Arrived at this bay, they found Indians eating mulberries, who, when they saw them, went to a cape opposite. While contriving and seeking for some means to cross the bay, there came over to them an Indian, and a Spainard whom they recognized to be Figueroa, one of the four we had sent forward from the island of Malhado.

He there recounted how he and his companions (**Note** Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese sailor and carpenter; Astudillo, the native of Zafra; and the Indian from the island of "Auia" (Cuba).) had got as far as that place, when two of them and an Indian died of cold and hunger, being exposed in the most inclement of seasons. He and Mendez were taken by the Indians, and while with them his associate fled, going as well as he could in the direction of Pánuco, and the natives pursuing, put him to death.

While living with these Indians, Figueroa learned from them that there was a Spainard among the Mariames, who had come over from the opposite side, and he found him among the Quevenes. This was Hernando de Esquivel, a native of Badajoz, who had come in company with the commissary. From him Figueroa learned the end to which the Governor, the comptroller, and the others had come. Esquivel told him that the comptroller and the friars had upset their boat at the confluence of the rivers, (**Note** The Mississippi delta) and that the boat of the Governor, moving along the coast, came with its people to land.

Narváez went in the boat until arriving at that great bay, where he took in the people, and, crossing them to the opposite point, returned for the comptroller, the friars, and the rest. And he related that being disembarked, the Governor had recalled the commission the comptroller held as his lieutenant, assigning the duties to a captain with him named Pantoja: that Narváez stayed the night in his boat, not wishing to come on shore, having a cockswain with him and a page who was unwell, there being no water nor anything to eat on board; that at midnight, the boat having only a stone for anchor, the north wind blowing strongly took her unobserved to sea, and they never knew more of their commander.

The others then went along the coast, and as they were arrested by a wide extent of water, they made rafts with much labor, on which they crossed to the opposite shore. Going on, they arrived at a point of woods on the banks of the water where were Indians, who, as they saw them coming, put their houses (**Note** *Doubtless consisting of mats fastened to a framework.*) into their canoes and went over to the opposite side. The Spainards, in consideration of the season, for it was now the month of November, stopped at this wood, where they found water and fuel, some crabs and shell-fish. They began, one by one, to die of cold and hunger; and, more than this, Pantoja, who was Lieutenant-Governor, used them severely, which Soto-Mayor (the brother of Vasco Porcallo, of the island of Cuba), who had come with the armament as camp-master, not being able to bear, had a struggle with him, and, giving him a blow with a club, Pantoja was instantly killed.

Thus did the number go on diminishing. The living dried the flesh of them that died; and the last that died was Soto-Mayor, when Esquivel preserved his flesh, and, feeding on it, sustained existence until the first of March, when an Indian of those that had fled, coming to see if they were alive, took Esquivel with him. While he was in the possession of the native, Figueroa saw him, and learned all that had been related. He besought Esquivel to come with him, that together they might pursue the way to Pánuco; to which Esquivel would not consent, saying that he had understood from the friars that Pánuco had been left behind: (**Note** That is, he supposed that he was then somewhere on the coast of central Mexico.) so he remained there and Figueroa went to the coast where he was accustomed to live.

CHAPTER 18

The story Figueroa recounted from Esquivel.

This account was all given by Figueroa, according to the relation he received from Esquivel, and from him through the others it came to me; whence may be seen and understood the fate of the armament, and the individual fortunes of the greater part of the people. Figueroa said, moreover, that if the Spainards should at any time go in that direction, it were possible they might see Esquivel, for he knew that he had fled from the Indian with whom he was, to the Mariames, who were neighbors. After Figueroa had finished telling the story, he and the Asturian made an attempt to go to other Indians farther on; but as soon as they who had the Indians discovered it, they followed, and beating them severely, stripped the Asturian and shot an arrow through his arm. They finally escaped by flight. The other Spainards remained, and prevailed on the Indians to receive them as slaves. In their service they were abused as slaves never were, nor men in any condition have ever been. Not content with frequently buffeting them, striking them with sticks, and pulling out their beard for amusement, they killed three of the six for only going from one house to another. These were the persons I have named before: Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva: and the three that remained looked forward to the same fate. Not to endure this life, Andrés Dorantes fled, and passed to the Mariames, the people among whom Esquivel tarried. They told him that having had Esquivel there, he wished to run away because a woman dreamed that a son of hers would kill him; and that they followed after, and slew him. They showed Dorantes his sword, beads, and book, with other things that had been his. Thus in obedience to their custom they take life, destroying even their male children on account of dreams. They cast away their daughters at birth, and cause them to be eaten by dogs. The reason of their doing this, as they state, is because all the nations of the country are their foes; and as they have unceasing war with them, if they were to marry away their daughters, they would so greatly multiply their enemies that they must be overcome and made slaves; thus they prefer to destroy all, rather than that from them should come a single enemy. We asked why they did not themselves marry them; and they said it would be a disgusting thing to marry among relatives, and far better to kill than to give them either to their kindred or to their foes. This is likewise the practice of their neighbors the Yguazes, but of no other people of that country. When the men would marry, they buy the women of their enemies: the price paid for a wife is a bow, the best that can be got, with two arrows: if it happens that the suitor should have no bow, then a net a fathom in length and another in breadth. They kill their male children, and buy those of strangers. The marriage state continues no longer than while the parties are satisfied, and they separate for the slightest cause. Dorantes was among this people, and after a few days escaped.

Castillo and Estevanico went inland to the Yguazes. This people are universally good archers and of a fine symmetry, although not so large as those we left. They have a nipple and a lip bored. (**Note** *Evidently for the insertion of canes, as was the custom of the Capoques and Hans of the island of Malhado.*) Their support is principally roots, of two or three kinds, and they look for them over the face of all the country. The food is poor and gripes the persons who eat it. The roots require roasting two days: many are very bitter, and withal difficult to be dug. They are sought the distance of two or three leagues, and so great is the want these people experience, that they cannot get through the year without them. Occasionally they kill deer, and at times take fish; but the quantity is so small and the famine so great, that they eat spiders and the eggs of ants, worms, lizards, salamanders, snakes, and vipers that kill whom they strike; and they eat earth and wood, and all that there is, the dung of deer, and other things that I omit to mention; and I honestly believe that were there stones in that land they would eat them. They save the bones of the fishes they consume, of snakes and other animals, that they may afterwards beat them together and eat the powder. The men bear no burthens, nor carry anything of weight; such are borne by women and old men who are of the least esteem. They have not so great love for their children as those we have before spoken of. (**Note** The Capoques of Malhado Island.)

Some among them are accustomed to sin against nature. The women work very hard, and do a great deal; of the twenty-four hours they have only six of repose; the rest of the night they pass in heating the ovens to bake those roots they eat. At daybreak they begin to dig them, to bring wood and water to their houses and get in readiness other things that may be necessary. The majority of the people are great thieves; for though they are free to divide with each other, on turning the head, even a son or a father will take what he can. They are great liars, and also great drunkards, which they became from the use of a certain liquor. (**Note** *Possibly the liquor was made from the peyote, or mescal button, still used by the Kiowa, Comanche, and others to produce stupefaction.*)

These Indians are so accustomed to running, that without rest or fatigue they follow a deer from morning to night. In this way they kill many. They pursue them until tired down, and sometimes overtake them in the race. Their houses are of matting, placed upon four hoops. They carry them on the back, and remove every two or three days in search of food. Nothing is planted for support. They are a merry people, considering the hunger they suffer; for they never cease, notwithstanding, to observe their festivities and areytos. To them the happiest part of the year is the season of eating prickly pears; they have hunger then no longer, pass all the time in dancing, and eat day and night. While these last, they squeeze out the juice, open and set them to dry, and when dry they are put in hampers like figs. These they keep to eat on their way back. The peel is beaten to powder.

It occurred to us many times while we were among this people, and there was no food, to be three or four days without eating, when they, to revive our spirits, would tell us not to be sad, that soon there would be prickly pears when we should eat a plenty and drink of the juice, when our bellies would be very big and we should be content and joyful, having no hunger. From the time they first told us this, to that at which the earliest were ripe enough to be eaten, was an interval of five or six months; so having tarried until the lapse of this period, and the season had come, we went to eat the fruit. We found mosquitos of three sorts, and all of them abundant in every part of the country. They poison and inflame, and during the greater part of the summer gave us great annoyance. As a protection we made fires, encircling the people with them, burning rotten and wet wood to produce smoke without flame. The remedy brought another trouble, and the night long we did little else than shed tears from the smoke that came into our eyes, besides feeling intense heat from the many fires, and if at any time we went out for repose to the sea-side and fell asleep, we were reminded with blows to make up the fires. The Indians of the interior have a different method, as intolerable, and worse even than the one I have spoken of, which is to go with brands in the hand firing the plains and forests within their reach, that the mosquitos may fly away, and at the same time to drive out lizards and other like things from the earth for them to eat. They are accustomed also to kill deer by encircling them with fires. The pasturage is taken from the cattle by burning, that necessity may drive them to seek it in places where it is desired they should go. They encamp only where there are wood and water; and sometimes all carry loads of these when they go to hunt deer, which are usually found where neither is to be got. On the day of their arrival, they kill the deer and other animals which they can, and consume all the water and all the wood in cooking and on the fires they make to relieve them of mosquitos. They remain the next day to get something to sustain them on their return; and when they go, such is their state from those insects that they appear to have the affliction of Lazarus. In this way do they appease their hunger, two or three times in the year, at the cost I have mentioned. From my own experience, I can state there is no torment known in this world that can equal it. Inland are many deer, birds, and beasts other than those I have spoken of. Cattle come as far as here. Three times I have seen them and eaten of their meat. I think they are about the size of those in Spain. They have small horns like the cows of Morocco; the hair is very long and flocky like the merino's. Some are tawny, others black. To my judgment the flesh is finer and fatter than that of this country. Of the skins of those not full grown the Indians make blankets, and of the larger they make shoes and bucklers. They come as far as the sea-coast of Florida, from a northerly direction, ranging through a tract of more than four hundred leagues; and throughout the whole region over which they run, the people who inhabit near, descend and live upon them, distributing a vast many hides into the interior country.

[Buckingham Smith introduces the following translation from the *Letter* (Oviedo, pp. 594-598) as throwing important light on the occurrences related in the foregoing chapter. F. W. H.]

"Thus ended the account of Figueroa, without his being able to add more to it, than that Esquivel was about there in the possession of some natives, and they might see him in a little while; but a month afterwards, it was known that he no longer lived, for having gone from the natives, they had followed after and put him to death. Figueroa tarried a few moments, long enough to relate the sad news. The Indian who brought him would not permit him to remain. Asturiano, the clergyman, and a young man being the only ones who could swim, accompanied them for the purpose of returning with fish which they were promised, as likewise that they should be brought back over that bay; but when the Indians found them at their houses, they would neither bring them nor let them return; on the contrary, they put their houses into their canoes and took the two Spainards with them, saying that they would soon come back....

"The eight companions remained that day to appease their hunger, and the next morning they saw two Indians of a rancho coming over the water to place their dwellings on the hither side. The purpose was to live on blackberries that grow in some places along the coast, which they seek at a season they know full well, and although precarious, they promise a food that supports life. They called to the Indians, who came as to persons they thought lightly of, taking some part of what they possessed almost by force. The Spainards besought the natives to set them over, which they did in a canoe, taking them to their houses near by, and at dark gave them a small quantity of fish. They went out the next day for more, and returned at night, giving them a part of what they had caught. The day following they moved off with the Indians and never after were the two seen whom the other Indians had taken away.

"At last the natives, weary of seeking food for their guests, turned away five, that they should go to some Indians who they said were to be found in another bay, six leagues farther on. Alonzo del Castillo went there with Pedro de Valdivieso, cousin of Andrés Dorantes, and another, Diego de Huelva, where they remained a long time; the two others went down near the coast, seeking relief, where they died, as Dorantes states, who found the bodies, one of whom, Diego Dorantes, was his cousin. The two hidalgos and the negro remaining in that rancho, sufficed for the use of the natives, to bring back loads of wood and water as slaves. After three or four days however, these likewise were turned off, when for some time they wandered about lost, without hope of relief; and going naked among marshes, having been previously despoiled one night of their clothing, they came upon those dead.

"They continued the route until they found some Indians, with whom Andrés Dorantes remained. A cousin of his, one of the three who had gone on to the bay where they stopped, came over from the opposite shore, and told him that the swimmers who went from them had passed in that direction, having their clothes taken from them and they much bruised about the head with sticks because they would not remain; still though beaten and stripped, they had gone on for the sake of the oath they had taken, never to stop even if death stood in the path, before coming to a country of Spainards. Dorantes states that he saw in the rancho where he was, the clothes belonging to the clergyman and to one of the swimmers, with a breviary or prayer book. Valdivieso returned, and a couple of days afterwards was killed, because he wished to flee, and likewise in a little time Diego de Huelva, because he forsook one lodge-house for another.

"The Spainards were there made slaves, forced with more cruelty to serve than the Moor would have used. Besides going stark naked and bare-footed over the coast burning in summer like fire, their continual occupation was bringing wood and water on the back, or whatever the Indians needed, and dragging canoes over inundated grounds in hot weather.

"These natives eat nothing the year round but fish, and of that not much. They experience far less hunger however, than the inhabitants inland among whom the Spaniards afterwards lived. The food often fails, causing frequent removals, or otherwise they starve.... They have finger nails that for any ordinary purpose are knives, and are their principal arms among themselves....

"The Spaniards lived here fourteen months, from May to the May ensuing of the year 1530, and to the middle of the month of August, when Andrés Dorantes, being at a point that appeared most favorable for going, went off at mid-day.... Castillo tarried among that hard people a year and a half later, until an opportunity presented for starting; but on arriving he found only the negro; Dorantes, finding these Indians unbearably cruel, had gone back more than twenty leagues to a river near the bay of Espíritu Sancto, among those who had killed Esquivel, the solitary one that had escaped from the boats of the Governor and Alonzo Enríques, slain, as they were told, because a woman had dreamed some absurdity. The people of this country have belief in dreams, their only superstition. On account of them they will even kill their children; and this hidalgo Dorantes states, that in the course of four years he had been a witness to the killing or burying alive of eleven or twelve young males, and rarely do they let a girl live....

"Andrés Dorantes passed ten months among this people, enduring much privation with continual labor, and in fear of being killed...."

CHAPTER 19

Our separation by the Indians.

When the six months were over, I had to spend with the Spainards to put in execution the plan we had concerted, the Indians went after prickly pears, the place at which they grew being thirty leagues off; (**Note** *In an article on the wanderings of Cabeza de Vaca, by Ponton and McFarland (Texas Historical Association Quarterly, I. 176, map, 1898), the northern limit of the cactus belt is placed on a line extending irregularly westward from the mouth of the Colorado River of Texas.*) and when we approached the point of flight, those among whom we were, quarrelled about a woman. After striking with fists, beating with sticks and bruising heads in great anger, each took his lodge and went his way, whence it became necessary that the Spainards should also separate, and in no way could we come together until another year.

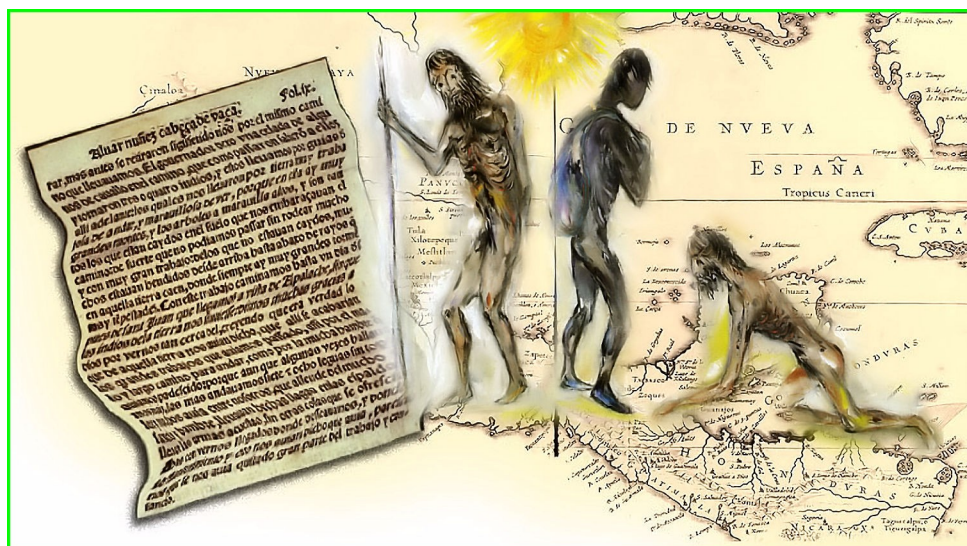
In this time I passed a hard life, caused as much by hunger as ill usage. Three times I was obliged to run from my masters, and each time they went in pursuit and endeavored to slay me without success. When the season of prickly pears returned, we again came together in the same place. After we had arranged our escape, and appointed a time, that very day the Indians separated and all went back. I told my comrades I would wait for them among the prickly-pear plants until the moon should be full. This day was the first of September, (**Note** 1534. Cabeza de Vaca had evidently lost his reckoning (perhaps during his illness), as the date of the new moon in this year was September 8.) and the first of the moon; and I said that if in this time they did not come as we had agreed, I would leave and go alone. So we parted, each going with his Indians. I remained with mine until the thirteenth day of the moon, having determined to flee to others when it should be full.

At this time Andrés Dorantes arrived with Estevanico and informed me that they had left Castillo with other Indians near by, called Lanegados; that they had encountered great obstacles and wandered about lost; that the next day the Indians, among whom we were, would move to where Castillo was, and were going to unite with those who held him and become friends, having been at war until then, and that in this way we should recover Castillo.

We had thirst all the time we ate the pears, which we quenched with their juice. We caught it in a hole made in the earth, and when it was full we drank until satisfied. It is sweet, and the color of must. In this manner they collect it for lack of vessels. There are many kinds of prickly pears, among them some very good, although they all appeared to me to be so, hunger never having given me leisure to choose, nor to reflect upon which were the best.

Nearly all these people drink rain-water, which lies about in spots. Although there are rivers, as the Indians never have fixed habitations, there are no familiar or known places for getting water. Throughout the country are extensive and beautiful plains with good pasturage; and I think it would be a very fruitful region were it worked and inhabited by civilized men. We nowhere saw mountains.

These Indians told us that there was another people next in advance of us, called Camones, (**Note Camoles in ch. 26. They evidently lived toward the northeast, north of Malhado Island (Galveston); unidentified.**) living towards the coast, and that they had killed the people who came in the boat of Peñalosa and Tellez, who arrived so feeble that even while being slain they could offer no resistance, and were all destroyed. We were shown their clothes and arms, and were told that the boat lay there stranded. This, the fifth boat, had remained till then unaccounted for. We have already stated how the boat of the Governor had been carried out to sea, and that of the comptroller and the friars had been cast away on the coast, of which Esquevel narrated the fate of the men. We have once told how the two boats in which Castillo, I, and Dorantes came, foundered near the Island of Malhado.



CHAPTER 20

Of our escape.

The second day after we had moved, we set forth with speed, trusting, for all the (**Note** *October 28, 1528.*) lateness of the season and that the prickly pears were about ending, with the mast which remained in the woods [field], we might still be enabled to travel over a large territory. Hurrying on that day in great dread lest the Indians should overtake us, we saw some smokes, and going in the direction of them we arrived there after vespers, and found an Indian. He ran as he discovered us coming, not being willing to wait for us. We sent the negro (*Estévanico*) after him, when he stopped, seeing him alone.

The negro told him we were seeking the people who made those fires. He answered that their houses were near by, and he would guide us to them. So we followed him. He ran to make known our approach, and at sunset we saw the houses. Before our arrival, at the distance of two crossbow shots from them, we found four Indians, who waited for us and received us well. We said in the language of the Mariames, that we were coming to look for them. They were evidently pleased with our company, and took us to their dwellings. Dorantes and the negro were lodged in the house of a physician, (**Note** *A shaman, or "medicine-man"*) Castillo and myself in that of another.

These people speak a different language, and are called Avacares. (**Note** *Chavavares in ch. 26, in which it is said that they joined the Mariames. Their affinity is unknown. The statement that the Spaniards are again among these tribes suggests that they were now pursuing a northerly direction.*) They are the same that carried bows to those with whom we formerly lived, going to traffic with them, and although they are of a different nation and tongue, they understand the other language.

They arrived that day with their lodges, at the place where we found them. The community directly brought us a great many prickly pears, having heard of us before, of our cures, and of the wonders worked by us, which, although there had been no others, were adequate to open ways for us through a country poor like this, to afford us people where oftentimes there are none, and to lead us through immediate dangers, not permitting us to be killed, sustaining us under great want, and putting into those nations the heart of kindness, as we shall relate hereafter.

CHAPTER 21

Our cure of some of the afflicted.

That same night of our arrival, some Indians came to Castillo and told him that they had great pain in the head, begging him to cure them. Many came to us that night sick, that we should heal them, each bringing a piece of venison, until the quantity became so great we knew not where to dispose of it. Every day went on increasing his compassion and his gifts. After the sick were attended to, they began to dance and sing, making themselves festive, until sunrise; and because of our arrival, the rejoicing was continued for three days.

When these were ended, we asked the Indians about the country farther on, the people we should find in it, and of the subsistence there. They answered us, that throughout all the region prickly-pear plants abounded; but the fruit was now gathered and all the people had gone back to their houses. They said the country was very cold, and there were few skins. Reflecting on this, and that it was already winter, we resolved to pass the season with these Indians.

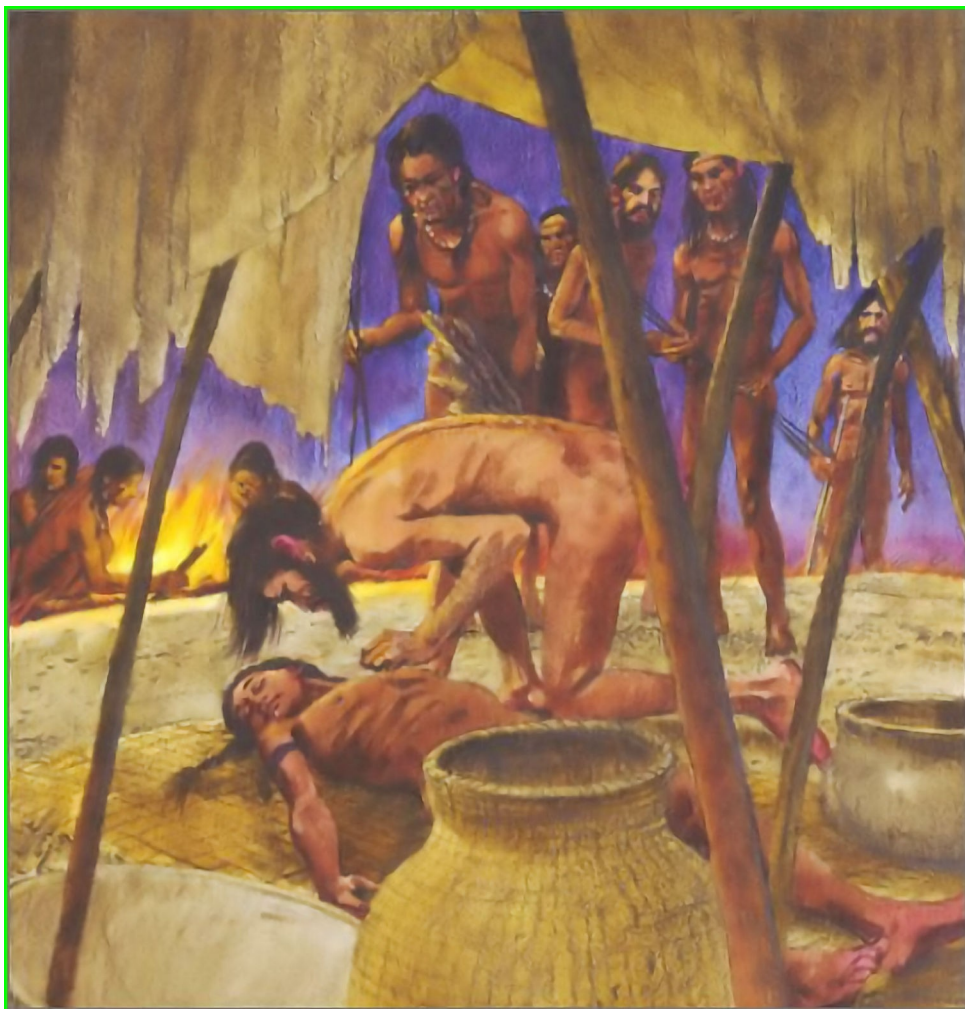
Five days after our arrival, all the Indians went off, taking us with them to gather more prickly pears, where there were other peoples speaking different tongues. After walking five days in great hunger, since on the way was no manner of fruit, we came to a river (**Note** *This may have been the San Antonio or the San Marcos-Guadalupe River.*) and put up our houses. We then went to seek the product of certain trees, which is like peas. As there are no paths in the country, I was detained some time. The others returned, and coming to look for them in the dark I got lost.

I found a burning tree, and in the warmth of it I passed the cold of that night. In the morning, loading myself with sticks, and taking two brands with me, I returned to seek them. In this manner I wandered five days, ever with my fire and load; for if the wood had failed me where none could be found, as many parts are without any, though I might have sought sticks elsewhere, there would have been no fire to kindle them.

This was all the protection I had against cold, while walking naked as I was born. Going to the low woods near the rivers, I prepared myself for the night, stopping in them before sunset. I made a hole in the ground and threw in fuel which the trees abundantly afforded, collected in good quantity from those that were fallen and dry. About the whole I made four fires, which I watched and made up from time to time. I also gathered some bundles of the coarse straw that there abounds, with which I covered myself in the hole. In this way I was sheltered at night from cold. On one occasion while I slept, the fire fell upon the straw, when it began to blaze so rapidly that notwithstanding the haste I made to get out of it, I carried some marks on my hair of the danger to which I was exposed.

All this while I tasted not a mouthful, nor did I find anything I could eat. My feet were bare and bled a good deal. Fortunately, the wind did not blow from the north in all this time, otherwise I should have died.

At the end of the fifth day I arrived on the margin of a river, where I found the Indians, who with the Catholics, had considered me dead, supposing that I had been stung by a viper. All were rejoiced to see me, and most so were my companions. They said that up to that time they had struggled with great hunger, which was the cause of their not having sought me. At night, all gave me of their prickly pears, and the next morning we set out for a place where they were in large quantity, with which we satisfied our great craving.



CHAPTER 22

The coming of other sick to us the next day.

The next day morning, many Indians came, and brought five persons who had cramps and were very unwell. They came that Castillo might cure them. Each offered his bow and arrows, which Castillo received. By the morning having come, all got up well and sound, and were as strong as though they never had a disorder. It caused great admiration, giving us firm hopes that we would be liberated and escape with our lives.

The Indians having gone and taken their friends with them in health, we departed for a place at which others were eating prickly pears. These people are called Cuthalchuches and Malicones, who speak different tongues. Adjoining them were others called Coayos and Susolas, who were on the opposite side, others called Atayos, (*Note These were possibly the Adai, or Adaize, although their country was in northeastern Texas, about Red River and the Sabine; nevertheless they may have wandered very far during the prickly-pear season. There is evidence that in 1792, fourteen families of the Adai migrated to a region south of San Antonio de Béjar, where they were merged with the tribes living thereabout. The main body, although greatly reduced, did not leave their old home until the nineteenth century, when the remnant, who had been missionized, were incorporated with their kindred the Caddo.*) who were at war with the Susolas, exchanging arrow shots daily. As through all the country they talked only of the wonders which had been worked through us, persons came from many parts to seek us that we might cure them. At the end of the second day after our arrival, some of the Susolas came to us and besought Castillo that he would go to cure one wounded and others sick, and they said that among them was one very near his end. Castillo was a timid practitioner, most so in serious and dangerous cases. The Indians told me to go and heal them, as they liked me; they remembered that I had ministered to them in the walnut grove when they gave us nuts and skins, which occurred when I first joined the Spainards. So I had to go with them, and Dorantes accompanied me with Estevanico. Coming near their huts, I perceived that the sick man we went to heal was dead. Many persons were around him weeping, and his house was prostrate, a sign that the one who dwelt in it is no more. (**Note** *It is not uncommon for all the possessions of an Indian, including his dwelling, to be destroyed at the time of his death.*) When I arrived I found his eyes rolled up, and the pulse gone, he having all the appearances of death, as they seemed to me and as Dorantes said. The natives took me to cure many others who were sick of a stupor, and presented me two more baskets of prickly pears, which I gave to the Indians who accompanied us. We then went back to our lodgings.

When the Cuthalchuches, who were in company with our Indians, were about to return to their own country, they left us all the prickly pears they had, without keeping one: they gave us flints of very high value there, a palm and a half in length, with which they cut. They begged that we would remember them and we promised to do so. They left, the most satisfied beings in the world, having given us the best of all they had.

We remained with the AVacares eight months, reckoned by the number of moons. In all this time people came to seek us from many parts, and they said that most truly we were children of the sun. Dorantes and the negro to this time had not attempted to practise; but because of the great solicitation made by those coming from different parts to find us, we all became physicians, although in being venturous and bold to attempt the performance of any cure, I was the most remarkable. So great was the confidence that they would become healed if we administered to them, they even believed that whilst we remained none of them could die. These and the rest of the people behind, related an extraordinary circumstance, and by the way they counted, there appeared to be fifteen or sixteen years since it occurred.

They are all ignorant of time, either by the sun or moon, nor do they reckon by the month or year; they better know and understand the differences of the seasons, when the fruits come to ripen, where the fish resort, (**Note** *Buckingham Smith prefers this meaning for *i en tiempo que muere el Pescado* to "by the time when the fish die," or "at times at which the fishes die."*) and the position of the stars, at which they are ready and practised. By these we were ever well treated. We dug our own food and brought our loads of wood and water. Their houses and also the things we ate, are like those of the nation from which we came, but they suffer far greater want, having neither maize, acorns, nor nuts. We always went naked like them, and covered ourselves at night with deer-skins.

Of the eight months we were among this people, six we supported in great want, for fish are not to be found where they are. At the expiration of the time, the prickly pears began to ripen, and I and the negro went, without these Indians knowing it, to others farther on, a day's journey distant, called Maliacones. (**Note** *This would seem to indicate that he was journeying in a generally northward or north-westward direction.*) At the end of three days, I sent him to bring Castillo and Dorantes, and they having arrived, we all set out with the Indians who were going to get the small fruit of certain trees on which they support themselves ten or twelve days whilst the prickly pears are maturing.

They joined others called Arbadaos, whom we found to be very weak, lank, and swollen, so much so as to cause us great astonishment. We told those with whom we came, that we wished to stop with these people, at which they showed regret and went back by the way they came; so we remained in the

field near the houses of the Indians, which when they observed, after talking among themselves they came up together, and each of them taking one of us by the hand, led us to their dwellings. Among them we underwent greater hunger than with the others; we ate daily not more than two handfuls of the prickly pears, which were green and so milky they burned our mouths. As there was lack of water, those who ate suffered great thirst. In our extreme want we bought two dogs, giving in exchange some nets, with other things, and a skin I used to cover myself.

I have already stated that throughout all this country we went naked, and as we were unaccustomed to being so, twice a year we cast our skins like serpents. The sun and air produced great sores on our breasts and shoulders, giving us sharp pain; and the large loads we had, being very heavy, caused the cords to cut into our arms. The country is so broken and thickset, that often after getting our wood in the forests, the blood flowed from us in many places, caused by the obstruction of thorns and shrubs that tore our flesh wherever we went. At times, when my turn came to get wood, after it had cost me much blood, I could not bring it out either on my back or by dragging.

I bartered with these Indians in combs that I made for them and in bows, arrows, and nets. We made mats, which are their houses, that they have great necessity for; and although they know how to make them, they wish to give their full time to getting food, since when otherwise employed they are pinched with hunger. Sometimes the Indians would set me to scraping and softening skins; and the days of my greatest prosperity there, were those in which they gave me skins to dress. I would scrape them a very great deal and eat the scraps, which would sustain me two or three days.

When it happened among these people, as it had likewise among others whom we left behind, that a piece of meat was given us, we ate it raw; for if we had put it to roast, the first native that should come along would have taken it off and devoured it; and it appeared to us not well to expose it to this risk; besides we were in such condition it would have given us pain to eat it roasted, and we could not have digested it so well as raw. Such was the life we spent there; and the meagre subsistence we earned by the matters of traffic which were the work of our hands.

CHAPTER 23

Of our departure after having eaten the dogs.

After eating the dogs, it seemed to us we had some strength to go forward; and so commending ourselves to God our Lord, that He would guide us, we took our leave of the Indians. They showed us the way to others, near by, who spoke their language. While on our journey, rain fell, and we travelled the day in wet. We lost our way and went to stop in an extensive wood. We pulled many leaves of the prickly pear, which we put at night in an oven we made, and giving them much heat, by the morning they were in readiness. After eating, we put ourselves under the care of the Almighty and started. We discovered the way we had lost. Having passed the wood, we found other houses, and coming up to them, we saw two women with some boys walking in the forest, who were frightened at the sight of us and fled, running into the woods to call the men. These arriving, stopped behind trees to look at us. We called to them, and they came up with much timidity. After some conversation they told us that food was very scarce with them; that near by were many houses of their people to which they would guide us. We came at night where were fifty dwellings. The inhabitants were astonished at our appearance, showing much fear. After becoming somewhat accustomed to us, they reached their hands to our faces and bodies, and passed them in like manner over their own.

We stayed there that night, and in the morning the Indians brought us their sick, beseeching us that we would bless them. They gave us of what they had to eat, the leaves of the prickly pear and the green fruit roasted. As they did this with kindness and good will, and were happy to be without anything to eat, that they might have food to give us, we tarried[83] some days. While there, others came from beyond, and when they were about to depart, we told our entertainers that we wished to go with those people. They felt much uneasiness at this, and pressed us warmly to stay: however, we took our leave in the midst of their weeping, for our departure weighed heavily upon them.



CHAPTER 24

Customs of the Indians of that country.

From the Island of Malhado (Galveston) to this land, all the Indians whom we saw have the custom from the time in which their wives find themselves pregnant, of not sleeping with them until two years after they have given birth. The children are suckled until the age of twelve years, when they are old enough to get support for themselves. We asked why they reared them in this manner; and they said because of the great poverty of the land, it happened many times, as we witnessed, that they were two or three days without eating, sometimes four, and consequently, in seasons of scarcity, the children were allowed to suckle, that they might not famish; otherwise those who lived would be delicate, having little strength.

If any one chance to fall sick in the desert, and cannot keep up with the rest, the Indians leave him to perish, unless it be a son or a brother; him they will assist, even to carrying on their back. It is common among them all to leave their wives when there is no conformity, and directly they connect themselves with whom they please. This is the course of the men who are childless; those who have children remain with their wives and never abandon them. When they dispute and quarrel in their towns, they strike each other with the fists, fighting until exhausted, and then separate.

Sometimes they are parted by the women going between them; the men never interfere. For no disaffection that arises do they resort to bows and arrows. After they have fought, or had out their dispute, they take their dwellings and go into the woods, living apart from each other until their heat has subsided. When no longer offended and their anger is gone, they return. From that time they are friends as if nothing had happened; nor is it necessary that any one should mend their friendships, as they in this way again unite them. If those that quarrel are single, they go to some neighboring people, and although these should be enemies, they receive them well and welcome them warmly, giving them so largely of what they have, that when their animosity cools, and they return to their town, they go rich.

They are all warlike, and have as much strategy for protecting themselves against enemies as they could have were they reared in Italy in continual feuds. When they are in a part of the country where their enemies may attack them, they place their houses on the skirt of a wood, the thickest and most tangled they can find, and near it make a ditch in which they sleep. The warriors are covered by small pieces of stick through which are loop-holes; these hide them and present so false an appearance, that if come upon they are not discovered. They open a very narrow way, entering into the midst of the wood, where a spot is prepared on which the women and children sleep.

When night comes they kindle fires in their lodges, that should spies be about, they may think to find them there; and before daybreak they again light those fires. If the enemy comes to assault the houses, they who are in the ditch make a sally; and from their trenches do much injury without those who are outside seeing or being able to find them. When there is no wood in which they can take shelter in this way, and make their ambuscades, they settle on open ground at a place they select, which they invest with trenches covered with broken sticks, having apertures whence to discharge arrows. These arrangements are made for night.

While I was among the Aguenes, their enemies coming suddenly at midnight, fell upon them, killed three and wounded many, so that they ran from their houses to the fields before them. As soon as these ascertained that their assailants had withdrawn, they returned to pick up all the arrows the others had shot, and following after them in the most stealthy manner possible, came that night to their dwellings without their presence being suspected. At four o'clock in the morning the Aguenes attacked them, killed five, and wounded numerous others, and made them flee from their houses, leaving their bows with all they possessed. In a little while came the wives of the Quevenes to them and formed a treaty whereby the parties became friends. The women, however, are sometimes the cause of war. All these nations, when they have personal enmities, and are not of one family, assassinate at night, waylay, and inflict gross barbarities on each other.

CHAPTER 25

Vigilance of the Indians in war.

They are the most watchful in danger of any people I ever knew. If they fear an enemy they are awake the night long, each with a bow at his side and a dozen arrows. He that would sleep tries his bow, and if it is not strung, he gives the turn necessary to the cord. They often come out from their houses, bending to the ground in such manner that they cannot be seen, looking and watching on all sides to catch every object.

If they perceive anything about, they are at once in the bushes with their bows and arrows, and there remain until day, running from place to place where it is needful to be, or where they think their enemies are. When the light has come, they unbend their bows until they go out to hunt. The strings are the sinews of deer.

The method they have of fighting, is bending low to the earth, and whilst shot at they move about, speaking and leaping from one point to another, thus avoiding the shafts of their enemies. So effectual is their manœuvring that they can receive very little injury from crossbow or arquebus; they rather scoff at them; for these arms are of little value employed in open field, where the Indians move nimbly about. They are proper for defiles and in water; everywhere else the horse will best subdue, being what the natives universally dread. (**Note** *Cabeza de Vaca is now evidently recalling the experience of Narvaez's men in Florida.*) Whosoever would fight them must be cautious to show no fear, or desire to have anything that is theirs; while war exists they must be treated with the utmost rigor; for if they discover any timidity or covetousness, they are a race that well discern the opportunities for vengeance, and gather strength from any weakness of their adversaries. When they use arrows in battle and exhaust their store, each returns his own way, without the one party following the other, although the one be many and the other few, such being their custom. Oftentimes the body of an Indian is traversed by the arrow; yet unless the entrails or the heart be struck, he does not die but recovers from the wound.

I believe these people see and hear better, and have keener senses than any other in the world. They are great in hunger, thirst, and cold, as if they were made for the endurance of these more than other men, by habit and nature.

Thus much I have wished to say, beyond the gratification of that desire men have to learn the customs and manners of each other, that those who hereafter at some time find themselves amongst these people, may have knowledge of their usages and artifices, the value of which they will not find inconsiderable in such event.

CHAPTER 26

Of the nations and tongues.

I desire to enumerate the natives and tongues that exist from those of Malhado to the farthest Cuchendados there are. Two languages are found in the island; the people of one are called Cahoques, of the other, Han. On the tierra-firme, over against the island, is another people, called Chorrucó, who take their names from the forests where they live. Advancing by the shores of the sea, others inhabit who are called the Doguenes, and opposite them others by the name of Mendica.

Farther along the coast are the Quevenes, and in front of them on the main, the Mariames; and continuing by the coast are other called Guaycones; and in front of them, within on the main, the Yguazes. At the close of these are the Atayos; and in their rear others, the Acubadaos, and beyond them are many in the same direction. By the coast live those called Quitoks, and in front inward on the main are the ChaVacares, to whom adjoin the Maliacones, the Cultalchulches and others called Susolas, and the Comos; and by the coast farther on are the Camoles; and on the same coast in advance are those whom we called People of the Figs.

They all differ in their habitations, towns and tongues. There is a language in which calling to a person, for "look here" they say "Arre aca," and to a dog "Xo." Everywhere they produce stupefaction with a smoke, and for that they will give whatever they possess. They drink a tea made from leaves of a tree like those of the oak, which they toast in a pot; and after these are parched, the vessel, still remaining on the fire, is filled with water. When the liquor has twice boiled, they pour it into a jar, and in cooling it use the half of a gourd. So soon as it is covered thickly with froth, it is drunk as warm as can be supported; and from the time it is taken out of the pot until it is used they are crying aloud: "Who wishes to drink?" When the women hear these cries, they instantly stop, fearing to move; and although they may be heavily laden, they dare do nothing further.

Should one of them move, they dishonor her, beating her with sticks, and greatly vexed, throw away the liquor they have prepared; while they who have drunk eject it, which they do readily and without pain. The reason they give for this usage is, that when they are about to drink, if the women move from where they hear the cry, something pernicious enters the body in that liquid, shortly producing death. At the time of boiling, the vessel must be covered; and if it should happen to be open when a woman passes, they use no more of that liquid, but throw it out. The color is yellow. They are three days taking it, eating nothing in the time, and daily each one drinks an arroba and a half.

(**Note** The tree from which the so-called "black drink" is made is *Ilex cassine*, and the custom of preparing and partaking of the liquid (known also as Carolina tea) was general among the tribes of the South, including the Gulf coast. The drink was known among the Catawbias as *yaupon*, among the Creeks as *ássi-lupútski*, the latter signifying "small leaves," commonly abbreviated *ássi*, whence the name of the celebrated Seminole chief Osceola, i.e., "Black-drink Hallooer," or "Black-drink Singer." The partaking of the black drink was an important part of the *puskita*, or *busk*, ceremony among the Creeks.)

When the women have their indisposition, they seek food only for themselves, as no one else will eat of what they bring. In the time I was thus among these people, I witnessed a diabolical practice; a man living with another, one of those who are emasculate and impotent. These go habited like women, and perform their duties, use the bow, and carry heavy loads. Among them we saw many mutilated in the way I describe. They are more muscular than other men, and taller: they bear very weighty burthens.



BLACK DRINK CEREMONY

CHAPTER 27

We moved away and were well received.

After parting with those we left weeping, (**Note** *The Arbadaos or Acubadaos.*) we went with the others to their houses and were hospitably received by the people in them. They brought their children to us that we might touch their hands, and gave us a great quantity of the flour of mezquiquez. (**Note** *The mesquite (Prosopis juliflora). The beans are still extensively used as food by the Indians of southern Arizona and northern Mexico.*) The fruit while hanging on the tree, is very bitter and like unto the carob; when eaten with earth it is sweet and wholesome. The method they have of preparing it is this: they make a hole of requisite depth in the ground, and throwing in the fruit, pound it with a club the size of the leg, a fathom and a half in length, until it is well mashed. Besides the earth that comes from the hole, they bring and add some handfuls, then returning to beat it a little while longer. Afterward it is thrown into a jar, like a basket, upon which water is poured until it rises above and covers the mixture. He that beats it tastes it, and if it appears to him not sweet, he asks for earth to stir in, which is added until he finds it sweet. Then all sit round, and each putting in a hand, takes out as much as he can. The pits and hulls are thrown upon a skin, whence they are taken by him who does the pounding, and put into the jar whereon water is poured as at first, whence having expressed the froth and juice, again the pits and husks are thrown upon the skin. This they do three or four times to each pounding. Those present, for whom this is a great banquet, have their stomachs greatly distended by the earth and water they swallow. The Indians made a protracted festival of this sort on our account, and great areitos (**Note** *An areito, or areyto, was a dance ceremony of the Arawak Indians of the West Indies in which their traditions were recounted in chants. Like buhío, previously mentioned, the word was now carried to the continent.*) during the time we remained.

When we proposed to leave them, some women of another people came there who lived farther along. They informed us whereabouts were their dwellings, and we set out for them, although the inhabitants entreated us to remain for that day, because the houses whither we were going were distant, there was no path to them, the women had come tired, and would the next day go with us refreshed and show us the way. Soon after we had taken our leave, some of the women, who had come on together from the same town, followed behind us. As there are no paths in the country we presently got lost, and thus travelled four leagues, when, stopping to drink, we found the women in pursuit of us at the water, who told us of the great exertion they had made to overtake us. We went on taking them for guides, and passed over a river towards evening, the water reaching to the breast. It might be as wide as that at Seville; its current was very rapid. (**Note** *Probably the Colorado River.*)

At sunset we reached a hundred Indian habitations. Before we arrived, all the people who were in them came out to receive us, with such yells as were terrific, striking the palms of their hands violently against their thighs. They brought us gourds bored with holes and having pebbles in them, an instrument for the most important occasions, produced only at the dance or to effect cures, and which none dare touch but those who own them.

They say there is virtue in them, and because they do not grow in that country, they come from heaven; nor do they know where they are to be found, only that the rivers bring them in their floods. (**Note** *The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico have cultivated gourds for use as rattles and receptacles, especially dippers, from time immemorial. If the Pecos were the stream, or one of the streams, whence the gourds were derived, they might have come from the pueblo of Pecos, southeast of the present Santa Fé; if from the Rio Grande, they might have come from various villages along that river and its tributaries in the north.*)

So great were the fear and distraction of these people, some to reach us sooner than others that they might touch us, they pressed us so closely that they lacked little of killing us; and without letting us put our feet to the ground, carried us to their dwellings. We were so crowded upon by numbers, that we went into the houses they had made for us. On no account would we consent that they should rejoice over us any more that night. The night long they passed in singing and dancing among themselves; and the next day they brought us all the people of the town, that we should touch and bless them in the way we had done to others among whom we had been. After this performance they presented many arrows to some women of the other town who had accompanied theirs.

The next day we left, and all the people of the place went with us; and when we came to the other Indians (Pánuco) we were as well received as we had been by the last. They gave us of what they had to eat, and the deer they had killed that day. Among them we witnessed another custom, which is this: they who were with us took from him who came to be cured, his bow and arrows, shoes and beads if he wore any, and then brought him before us, that we should heal him. After being attended to, he would go away highly pleased, saying that he was well.

So we parted from these Indians, and went to others by whom we were welcomed. They brought us their sick, which, they declared were made sound; he who was healed, believed we could cure him; and with what the others to whom we had administered would relate, they made great rejoicing and dancing, so that they left us no sleep.

CHAPTER 28

Of another strange custom.

Leaving these Indians, we went to the dwellings of numerous others. From this place began another novel custom, which is, that while the people received us very well, those who accompanied us began to use them so ill as to take their goods and ransack their houses, without leaving anything. To witness this unjust procedure gave us great concern, inflicted too on those who received us hospitably; we feared also that it might provoke offence, and be the cause of some tumult between them; but, as we were in no condition to make it better, or to dare chastise such conduct, for the present we had to bear with it, until a time when we might have greater authority among them. They, also, who lost their effects, noticing our dejection, attempted to console us by saying that we should not be grieved on this account, as they were so gratified at having seen us, they held their properties to be well bestowed, and that farther on they would be repaid by others who were very rich.

On all the day's travel we received great inconvenience from the many persons following us. Had we attempted to escape we could not have succeeded, such was their haste in pursuit, in order to touch us. So great was the opportunity for this privilege, we consumed three hours in going through with them that they might depart. The next day all the inhabitants were brought before us. The greater part were clouded of an eye, and others in like manner were entirely blind, which caused in us great astonishment. They are a people of fine figure, agreeable features, and whiter than any of the many nations we had seen until then.

Here we began to see mountains; they appeared to come in succession from the North Sea, and, according to the information the Indians gave us, we believe they rise fifteen leagues from the sea.

(Note *Probably the escarpment that extends from Austin to Eagle Pass. The Colorado (which was probably the wide, deep stream previously encountered) was crossed seemingly below the present Austin. It should be remembered that the information regarding the point at which the mountains commenced to rise was given by Indians whose language the Spaniards could not understand. At any rate, the fact that the latter believed the mountains to rise fifteen leagues from the sea would tend to indicate that the direction they had been following was a northerly one.*)

We set forth in a direction towards them with these Indians, and they guided us by the way of some kindred of theirs; for they wished to take us only where were their relations, and were not willing that their enemies should come to such great good, as they thought it was to see us. After we arrived they that went with us plundered the others; but as the people there knew the fashion,

they had hidden some things before we came; and having welcomed us with great festivity and rejoicing, they brought out and presented to us what they had concealed. These were beads, ochre, and some little bags of silver.

(Note According to Oviedo: *"This is an error of the printer, and should read 'little bags of margarite [pearl-mica],' instead of silver."* Buckingham Smith translates Oviedo's margarita, "pearls," and Cabeza de Vaca's margarita as "marquesite." It may be added that magnetic iron ore of the highest quality occurs in Mason County, Texas.

In pursuance of custom, we directly gave them to the Indians who came with us, which, when they had received, they began their dances and festivities, sending to call others from a town near by, that they also might see us.

In the afternoon they all came and brought us beads and bows, with trifles of other sort, which we also distributed. Desiring to leave the next day, the inhabitants all wished to take us to others, friends of theirs, who were at the point of the ridge, stating that many houses were there, and people who would give us various things. As it was out of our way, we did not wish to go to them, and took our course along the plain near the mountains, which we believed not to be distant from the coast where the people are all evil disposed, and we considered it preferable to travel inland; for those of the interior are of a better condition and treated us mildly, and we felt sure that we should find it more populous and better provisioned. Moreover, we chose this course because in traversing the country we should learn many particulars of it, so that should we be lead to the land of Spainards, we might carry that information and news of it. As the Indians saw that we were determined not to go where they would take us, they said that in the direction we would go, there were no inhabitants, nor any prickly pears nor other thing to eat, and begged us to tarry there that day; we accordingly did so. They directly sent two of their number to seek for people in the direction that we wished to go; and the next day we left, taking with us several of the Indians. The women went carrying water, and so great was our authority that no one dared drink of it without our permission.

Two leagues from there we met those who had gone out, and they said that they had found no one; at which the Indians seemed much disheartened, and began again to entreat us to go by way of the mountains. We did not wish to do so, and they, seeing our disposition, took their leave of us with much regret, and returned down the river to their houses, while we ascended along by it. After a little time we came upon two women with burthens, who put them down as they saw us, and brought to us, of what they carried. It was the flour of maize. They told us that farther up on that river we should find dwellings, a plenty of prickly pears and of that meal. We bade them farewell: they were going to those whom we had left.

We walked until sunset, and arrived at a town of some twenty houses, where we were received with weeping and in great sorrow; for they already knew that wheresoever we should come, all would be pillaged and spoiled by those who accompanied us. When they saw that we were alone, they lost their fear, and gave us prickly pears with nothing more. We remained there that night, and at dawn, the Indians who had left us the day before, broke upon their houses. As they came upon the occupants unprepared and in supposed safety, having no place in which to conceal anything, all they possessed was taken from them, for which they wept much. In consolation the plunderers told them that we were children of the sun and that we had power to heal the sick and to destroy; and other lies even greater than these, which none knew how to tell better than they when they find it convenient. They bade them conduct us with great respect, advised that they should be careful to offend us in nothing, give us all they might possess, and endeavor to take us where people were numerous; and that wheresoever they arrived with us, they should rob and pillage the people of what they have, since this was customary.



CHAPTER 29

The Indians plunder each other.

After the Indians had told and shown these natives well what to do, they left us together and went back. Remembering the instruction, they began to treat us with the same awe and reverence that the others had shown. We travelled with them three days, and they took us where were many inhabitants. Before we arrived, these were informed of our coming by the others, who told them respecting us all that the first had imparted, adding much more; for these people are all very fond of romance, and are great liars, particularly so where they have any interest. When we came near the houses all the inhabitants ran out with delight and great festivity to receive us. Among other things, two of their physicians (shamans) gave us two gourds, and thenceforth we carried these with us, and added to our authority a token highly revered by Indians. (**Note** *The possession of one of these "medicine" rattles was not improbably one of the causes of the death of Estévanico at the hands of the Zuñis of Cibola in 1539.*) those who accompanied us rifled the houses; but as these were many and the others few, they could not carry off what they took, and abandoned more than the half.

From here we went along the base of the ridge, striking inland more than fifty leagues, and at the close we found upwards of forty houses. Among the articles given us, Andrés Dorantes received a hawk-bell of copper, thick and large, figured with a face, which the natives had shown, greatly prizing it. They told him that they had received it from others, their neighbors; we asked them whence the others had obtained it, and they said it had been brought from the northern direction, where there was much copper, which was highly esteemed. We concluded that whencesoever it came there was a foundry, and that work was done in hollow form.

We departed the next day, and traversed a ridge seven leagues in extent. The stones on it are scoria of iron. (magnetic iron). At night we arrived at many houses seated on the banks of a very beautiful river. (**Note** *Perhaps the Llano, a branch of the Colorado, or possibly they had met the Colorado again.*) The owners of them came half way out on the road to meet us, bringing their children on their backs. They gave us many little bags of margarite and pulverized galena (lead), with which they rub the face. They presented us many beads, and blankets of cowhide, loading all who accompanied us with some of every thing they had. They eat prickly pears and the seed of pine. In that country are small pine trees, the cones like little eggs; but the seed is better than that of Castile, as its husk is very thin, and while green is beaten and made into balls, to be thus eaten. If the seed be dry, it is pounded in the husk, and consumed in the form of flour.

Those who there received us, after they had touched us went running to their houses and directly returned, and did not stop running, going and coming, to bring us in this manner many things for support on the way. They fetched a man to me and stated that a long time since he had been wounded by an arrow in the right shoulder, and that the point of the shaft was lodged above his heart, which, he said, gave him much pain, and in consequence, he was always sick. Probing the wound I felt the arrow-head, and found it had passed through the cartilage. With a knife I carried, I opened the breast to the place, and saw the point was aslant and troublesome to take out. I continued to cut, and, putting in the point of the knife, at last with great difficulty I drew the head forth. It was very large. With the bone of a deer, and by virtue of my calling, I made two stitches that threw the blood over me, and with hair from a skin I stanchd the flow. They asked me for the arrow-head after I had taken it out, which I gave, when the whole town came to look at it. They sent it into the back country that the people there might view it. In consequence of this operation they had many of their customary dances and festivities. The next day I cut the two stitches and the Indian was well. The wound I made appeared only like a seam in the palm of the hand. He said he felt no pain or sensitiveness in it whatsoever. This cure gave us control throughout the country in all that the inhabitants had power, or deemed of any value, or cherished. We showed them the hawk-bell we brought, and they told us that in the place whence that had come, were buried many plates of the same material; it was a thing they greatly esteemed, and where it came from were fixed habitations. The country we considered to be on the South Sea, which we had ever understood to be richer than the one of the North.



We left there, and travelled through so many sorts of people, of such diverse languages, the memory fails to recall them. They ever plundered each other, and those that lost, like those that gained, were fully content. We drew so many followers that we had not use for their services. While on our way through these vales, every Indian carried a club three palms in length, and kept on the alert. On raising a hare, which animals are abundant, they surround it directly and throw numerous clubs at it with astonishing precision.

Thus they cause it to run from one to another; so that, according to my thinking, it is the most pleasing sport which can be imagined, as oftentimes the animal runs into the hand. So many did they give us that at night when we stopped we had eight or ten back-loads apiece. Those having bows were not with us; they dispersed about the ridge in pursuit of deer; and at dark came bringing five or six for each of us, besides quail, and other game. Indeed, whatever they either killed or found, was put before us, without themselves daring to take anything until we had blessed it, though they should be expiring of hunger, they having so established the rule, since marching with us.

The women carried many mats, of which the men made us houses, each of us having a separate one, with all his attendants. After these were put up, we ordered the deer and hares to be roasted, with the rest that had been taken. This was done by means of certain ovens made for the purpose. Of each we took a little and the remainder we gave to the principal personage of the people coming with us, directing him to divide it among the rest.

Every one brought his portion to us, that we might breathe upon and give it our benediction; for not until then did they dare eat any of it. Frequently we were accompanied by three or four thousand persons, and as we had to breathe upon and sanctify the food and drink for each, and grant permission to do the many things they would come to ask, it may be seen how great was the annoyance. The women first brought us prickly pears, spiders, worms, and whatever else they could gather; for even were they famishing, they would eat nothing unless we gave it them.

In company with these, we crossed a great river coming from the north, (**Note** *Evidently the Pecos. This is the first stream mentioned as flowing from the north.*) and passing over some plains thirty leagues in extent, we found many persons coming a long distance to receive us, who met us on the road over which we were to travel, and welcomed us in the manner of those we had left.

CHAPTER 30

The fashion of receiving us changes.

From this place was another method of receiving us, as respects the pillage. Those who came out in the ways to bring us presents were not plundered; but on our coming into their houses, themselves offered us all they had, as well as the houses. We gave the things to the chief personages who accompanied us, that they should divide them; those who were despoiled always followed us until coming to a populous country, where they might repair their loss.

They would tell those among whom we came, to retain everything and make no concealment, as nothing could be done without our knowledge, and we might cause them to die, as the sun revealed everything to us. So great was their fear that during the first days they were with us, they continually trembled, without daring even to speak, or raise their eyes to the heavens. They guided us through more than fifty leagues of desert, over rough mountains, which being dry were without game, and in consequence we suffered much from hunger.

(Note Eighty leagues would probably be a reasonable estimate of the distance from the Pecos to the Rio Grande, which the travellers had now reached. It would seem strange that no mention is made of the cañon of the latter stream (which hereabouts flows through a territory four thousand feet above sea level), were it not for the fact that they had become thoroughly inured to suffering and hard travelling; nevertheless, the terribly rough country through which they had just been guided from stream to stream is commented on, while the fact that the Rio Grande here "flows between some ridges")

At the termination we forded a very large river, the water coming up to our breasts. From this place, many of the people began to sicken from the great privation and labor they had undergone in the passage of those ridges, which are sterile and difficult in the extreme. They conducted us to certain plains at the base of the mountains, where people came to meet us from a great distance, and received us as the last had done, and gave so many goods to those who came with us, that the half were left because they could not be carried. I told those who gave, to resume the goods that they might not lie there and be lost; but they answered they could in no wise do so, as it was not their custom after they had bestowed a thing to take it back; so considering the articles no longer of value, they were left to perish.

We told these people that we desired to go where the sun sets; and they said inhabitants in that direction were remote. We commanded them to send and make known our coming; but they strove to excuse themselves the best they could, the people being their enemies, and they did not wish to go to them.

Not daring to disobey, however, they sent two women, one of their own, the other a captive from that people; for the women can negotiate even though there be war. We followed them, and stopped at a place where we agreed to wait. They tarried five days; and the Indians said they could not have found anybody.

We told them to conduct us towards the north; and they answered, as before, that except afar off there were no people in that direction, and nothing to eat, nor could water be found. Notwithstanding all this, we persisted, and said we desired to go in that course. They still tried to excuse themselves in the best manner possible. At this we became offended, and one night I went out to sleep in the woods apart from them; but directly they came to where I was, and remained all night without sleep, talking to me in great fear, telling me how terrified they were, beseeching us to be no longer angry, and said that they would lead us in the direction it was our wish to go, though they knew they should die on the way.

Whilst we still feigned to be displeased lest their fright should leave them, a remarkable circumstance happened, which was that on the same day many of the Indians became ill, and the next day eight men died. Abroad in the country, wheresoever this became known, there was such dread that it seemed as if the inhabitants would die of fear at sight of us.

They besought us not to remain angered, nor require that more of them should die. They believed we caused their death by only willing it, when in truth it gave us so much pain that it could not be greater; for, beyond their loss, we feared they might all die, or abandon us of fright, and that other people thenceforward would do the same, seeing what had come to these.

We witnessed one thing with great admiration, that the parents, brothers, and wives of those who died had great sympathy for them in their suffering; but, when dead, they showed no feeling, neither did they weep nor speak among themselves, make any signs, nor dare approach the bodies until we commanded these to be taken to burial.

While we were among these people, which was more than fifteen days, we saw no one speak to another, nor did we see an infant smile: the only one that cried they took off to a distance, and with the sharp teeth of a rat they scratched it from the shoulders down nearly to the end of the legs. Seeing this cruelty, and offended at it, I asked why they did so: they said for chastisement, because the child had wept in my presence. These terrors they imparted to all those who had lately come to know us, that they might give us whatever they had; for they knew we kept nothing, and would relinquish all to them. This people were the most obedient we had found in all the land, the best conditioned, and, in general, comely.

The sick having recovered, and three days having passed since we came to the place, the women whom we sent away returned, and said they had found very few people; nearly all had gone for cattle, being then in the season. We ordered the convalescent to remain and the well to go with us, and that at the end of two days' journey those women should go with two of our number to fetch up the people, and bring them on the road to receive us. Consequently, the next morning the most robust started with us.

At the end of three days' travel we stopped, and the next day Alonzo del Castillo set out with Estevanico the negro, taking the two women as guides. She that was the captive led them to the river which ran between some ridges, where was a town at which her father lived; and these habitations were the first seen, having the appearance and structure of houses.

Here Castillo and Estevanico arrived, and, after talking with the Indians, Castillo returned at the end of three days to the spot where he had left us, and brought five or six of the people. He told us he had found fixed dwellings of civilization, that the inhabitants lived on beans and pumpkins, and that he had seen maize.

This news the most of anything delighted us. Castillo told us the negro was coming with all the population to wait for us in the road not far off. Accordingly we left, and, having travelled a league and a half, we met the negro and the people coming to receive us. They gave us beans, many pumpkins, calabashes, blankets of cowhide and other things. As this people and those who came with us were enemies, and spoke not each other's language, we discharged the latter, giving them what we received, and we departed with the others. Six leagues from there, as the night set in we arrived at the houses, where great festivities were made over us. We remained one day, and the next set out with these Indians. They took us to the settled habitations of others, who lived upon the same food.

From that place onward was another usage. Those who knew of our approach did not come out to receive us on the road as the others had done, but we found them in their houses, and they had made others for our reception. They were all seated with their faces turned to the wall, their heads down, the hair brought before their eyes, and their property placed in a heap in the middle of the house. From this place they began to give us many blankets of skin; and they had nothing they did not bestow.

They have the finest persons of any people we saw, of the greatest activity and strength, who best understood us and intelligently answered our inquiries. We called them the Cow nation, because most of the cattle killed are slaughtered in their neighborhood, and along up that river for over fifty leagues they destroy great numbers.

They go entirely naked after the manner of the first we saw. The women are dressed with deer-skin, and some few men, mostly the aged, who are incapable of fighting. The country is very populous. We asked how it was they did not plant maize. They answered it was that they might not lose what they should put in the ground; that the rains had failed for two years in succession, and the seasons were so dry the seed had everywhere been taken by the moles, and they could not venture to plant again until after water had fallen copiously.

They begged us to tell the sky to rain, and to pray for it, and we said we would do so. We also desired to know whence they got the maize, and they told us from where the sun goes down; there it grew throughout the region, and the nearest was by that path.

Since they did not wish to go thither, we asked by what direction we might best proceed, and bade them inform us concerning the way; they said the path was along up by that river towards the north, for otherwise in a journey of seventeen days we should find nothing to eat, except a fruit they call *chac-can*, that is ground between stones, and even then it could with difficulty be eaten for its dryness and pungency,—which was true. They showed it to us there, and we could not eat it. They informed us also that, whilst we travelled by the river upward, we should all the way pass through a people that were their enemies, who spoke their tongue, and, though they had nothing to give us to eat, they would receive us with the best good will, and present us with mantles of cotton, hides, and other articles of their wealth. Still it appeared to them we ought by no means to take that course.

(Note The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico are here referred to. Later Spanish explorers found cotton garments in abundance in their country. The statement here that the Jumanos spoke the same tongue as some of the Pueblos is significant, and accounts in a measure for the affiliation of the Jumanos with the Piros when missions were established by the Franciscans among these two tribes east of the Rio Grande, in New Mexico, in 1629.)

Doubting what it would be best to do, and which way we should choose for suitableness and support, we remained two days with these Indians, who gave us beans and pumpkins for our subsistence. Their method of cooking is so new that for its strangeness I desire to speak of it; thus it may be seen and remarked how curious and diversified are the contrivances and ingenuity of the human family. Not having discovered the use of pipkins, to boil what they would eat, they fill the half of a large calabash with water, and throw on the fire many stones of such as are most convenient and readily take the heat. When hot, they are taken up with tongs of sticks and dropped into the calabash until the water in it boils from the fervor of the stones. Then whatever is to be cooked is put in, and until it is done they continue taking out cooled stones and throwing in hot ones. Thus they boil their food.

CHAPTER 31

Of our taking the way to the maize.

Two days being spent while we tarried, we resolved to go in search of the maize. We did not wish to follow the path leading to where the cattle are, because it is towards the north, and for us very circuitous, since we ever held it certain that going towards the sunset we must find what we desired.

Thus we took our way, and traversed all the country until coming out at the South Sea. Nor was the dread we had of the sharp hunger through which we should have to pass (as in verity we did, throughout the seventeen days' journey of which the natives spoke) sufficient to hinder us. During all that time, in ascending by the river, they gave us many coverings of cowhide; but we did not eat of the fruit. Our sustenance each day was about a handful of deer-suet, which we had a long time been used to saving for such trials. Thus we passed the entire journey of seventeen days, and at the close we crossed the river and travelled other seventeen days.

(Note Probably the Rio Santa Maria, in Chihuahua.)

As the sun went down, upon some plains that lie between chains of very great mountains, (The Sierra Madre.) we found a people who for the third part of the year eat nothing but the powder of straw, and, that being the season when we passed, we also had to eat of it, until reaching permanent habitations, where was abundance of maize brought together. **(Note The numerous villages of the Opata and cognate tribes of Sonora.)** They gave us a large quantity in grain and flour, pumpkins, beans, and shawls of cotton. With all these we loaded our guides, who went back the happiest creatures on earth.

Some houses are of earth, the rest all of cane mats. From this point we marched through more than a hundred leagues of country, and continually found settled domicils, with plenty of maize and beans. The people gave us many deer and cotton shawls better than those of New Spain, many beads and certain corals found on the South Sea, and fine turquoises that come from the north. Indeed they gave us every thing they had. To me they gave five emeralds (possibly malachites) made into arrow-heads, which they use at their singing and dancing. They appeared to be very precious. I asked whence they got these; and they said the stones were brought from some lofty mountains that stand toward the north, where were populous towns and very large houses, and that they were purchased with plumes and the feathers of parrots.

Among this people the women are treated with more decorum than in any part of the Indias we had visited. They wear a shirt of cotton that falls as low as the knee, and over it half sleeves with skirts reaching to the ground, made of dressed deer-skin. It opens in front and is brought close with straps of

leather. They soap this with a certain root (**Note** *Amole, the root of the yucca.*) that cleanses well, by which they are enabled to keep it becomingly. Shoes are worn. The people all came to us that we should touch and bless them, they being very urgent, which we could accomplish only with great labor, for sick and well all wished to go with a benediction. Many times it occurred that some of the women who accompanied us gave birth; and so soon as the children were born the mothers would bring them to us that we should touch and bless them.

These Indians ever accompanied us until they delivered us to others; and all held full faith in our coming from heaven. While travelling, we went without food all day until night, and we ate so little as to astonish them. We never felt exhaustion, neither were we in fact at all weary, so inured were we to hardship. We possessed great influence and authority: to preserve both, we seldom talked with them. The negro was in constant conversation; he informed himself about the ways we wished to take, of the towns there were, and the matters we desired to know.

We passed through many and dissimilar tongues. They always understood us, and we them. We questioned them, and received their answers by signs, just as if they spoke our language and we theirs; for, although we knew six languages, we could not everywhere avail ourselves of them, there being a thousand differences.

Throughout all these countries the people who were at war immediately made friends, that they might come to meet us, and bring what they possessed. In this way we left all the land at peace, and we taught all the inhabitants by signs, which they understood, that in heaven was a Man we called God, who had created the sky and the earth; Him we worshipped and had for our master; that we did what He commanded and from His hand came all good; and would they do as we did, all would be well with them.

So ready of apprehension we found them that, could we have had the use of language by which to make ourselves perfectly understood, we should have left them all Catholics. Thus much we gave them to understand the best we could. And afterward, when the sun rose, they opened their hands together with loud shouting towards the heavens, and then drew them down all over their bodies. They did the same again when the sun went down. They are a people of good condition and substance, capable in any pursuit.

CHAPTER 32

The Indians give us the hearts of deer.

In the town where the emeralds were presented to us the people gave Dorantes over six hundred open hearts of deer. They ever keep a good supply of them for food, and we called the place Pueblo de los Corazones. (**Note** *Town of the Hearts, at or near the present Ures, on the Rio Sonora. The place became celebrated in 1540, when Coronado's army passed through the country.*) It is the entrance into many provinces on the South Sea. They who go to look for them, and do not enter there, will be lost. On the coast is no maize: the inhabitants eat the powder of rush and of straw, and fish that is caught in the sea from rafts, not having canoes. With grass and straw the women cover their nudity. They are a timid and dejected people. (*Note These were the Seri, Guaymas, Upanguaymas, and Tepoca tribes.*)

We think that near the coast by way of those towns through which we came are more than a thousand leagues of inhabited country, plentiful of subsistence. Three times the year it is planted with maize and beans. Deer are of three kinds; one the size of the young steer of Spain. There are innumerable houses, such as are called bahíos. They have poison from a certain tree the size of the apple. For effect no more is necessary than to pluck the fruit and moisten the arrow with it, or, if there be no fruit, to break a twig and with the milk do the like. The tree is abundant and so deadly that, if the leaves be bruised and steeped in some neighboring water, the deer and other animals drinking it soon burst.

(**Note** *"Mago, in the Opata language, is a small tree, very green, luxuriant, and beautiful to the eye; but it contains a deadly juice which flows upon making a slight incision in the bark. The natives rub their arrows with it, and for this reason they call it arrow herb; but at present they use very little."*)

We were in this town three days. A day's journey farther was another town, at which the rain fell heavily while we were there, and the river became so swollen we could not cross it, which detained us fifteen days. In this time Castillo saw the buckle of a sword-belt on the neck of an Indian and stitched to it the nail of a horseshoe. He took them, and we asked the native what they were: he answered that they came from heaven. We questioned him further, as to who had brought them thence: they all responded that certain men who wore beards like us had come from heaven and arrived at that river, bringing horses, lances, and swords, and that they had lanced two Indians. In a manner of the utmost indifference we could feign, we asked them what had become of those men. They answered us that they had gone to sea, putting their lances beneath the water, and going themselves also under the water; afterwards that they were seen on the surface going towards the sunset.

We had before despaired of ever hearing more of Spainards. Even yet we were left in great doubt and anxiety, thinking those people were merely persons who had come by sea on discoveries. However, as we had now such exact information, we made greater speed, and, as we advanced on our way, the news of the Catholics continually grew.

We told the natives that we were going in search of that people, to order them not to kill nor make slaves of them, nor take them from their lands, nor do other injustice. Of this the Indians were very glad. We passed through many territories and found them all vacant: their inhabitants wandered fleeing among the mountains, without daring to have houses or till the earth for fear of Spainards. The sight was one of infinite pain to us, a land very fertile and beautiful, abounding in springs and streams, the hamlets deserted and burned, the people thin and weak, all fleeing or in concealment.

As they did not plant, they appeased their keen hunger by eating roots and the bark of trees. We bore a share in the famine along the whole way; for poorly could these unfortunates provide for us, themselves being so reduced they looked as though they would willingly die. They brought shawls of those they had concealed because of the Spainards, presenting them to us; and they related how the Catholics at other times had come through the land, destroying and burning the towns, carrying away half the men, and all the women and the boys, while those who had been able to escape were wandering about fugitives.

We found them so alarmed they dared not remain anywhere. They would not nor could they till the earth, but preferred to die rather than live in dread of such cruel usage as they received. Although these showed themselves greatly delighted with us, we feared that on our arrival among those who held the frontier, and fought against the Spainards, they would treat us badly, and revenge upon us the conduct of their enemies; but they began to dread and respect us as the others had done, and even somewhat more, at which we no little wondered.

Thence it may at once be seen that, to bring all these people to be Catholics and to the obedience of the Imperial Majesty, they must be won by kindness, which is a way certain, and no other is. They took us to a town on the edge of a range of mountains, to which the ascent is over difficult crags. We found many people there collected out of fear of the Spainards. They received us well, and presented us all they had. They gave us more than two thousand back-loads of maize, which we gave to the distressed and hungered beings who guided us to that place. The next day we despatched four messengers through the country, as we were accustomed to do, that they should call together all the rest of the Indians at a town distant three days' march. We set out the day after with all the people. The tracks of the Spainards and marks where they slept were continually seen.

At mid-day we met our messengers, who told us they had found no Indians, that they were roving and hiding in the forests, fleeing that the Catholics might not kill nor make them slaves; the night before they had observed the Spainards from behind trees, and discovered what they were about, carrying away many people in chains.

Those who came with us were alarmed at this intelligence; some returned to spread the news over the land that the Catholics were coming; and many more would have followed, had we not forbidden it and told them to cast aside their fear, when they reassured themselves and were well content. At the time we had Indians with us belonging a hundred leagues behind, and we were in no condition to discharge them, that they might return to their homes.

To encourage them, we stayed there that night; the day after we marched and slept on the road. The following day those whom we had sent forward as messengers guided us to the place where they had seen Spainards. We arrived in the afternoon, and saw at once that they told the truth. We perceived that the persons were mounted, by the stakes to which the horses had been tied.

From this spot, called the river Petutan, (**Note** *Petatlan*; so also in the edition of 1542. This is the *Rio Sinaloa*.) to the river to which Diego de Guzmán came, where we heard of Spainards, may be as many as eighty leagues; thence to the town where the rains overtook us, twelve leagues, and that is twelve leagues from the South Sea.

(**Note** *The Gulf of California*. As he did not go to the coast, however, his estimate is considerably below the actual distance.)

Throughout this region, wheresoever the mountains extend, we saw clear traces of gold and lead, iron, copper, and other metals. Where the settled habitations are, the climate is hot; even in January the weather is very warm. Thence toward the meridian, the country unoccupied to the North Sea is unhappy and sterile. There we underwent great and incredible hunger. Those who inhabit and wander over it are a race of evil inclination and most cruel customs. The people of the fixed residences and those beyond regard silver and gold with indifference, nor can they conceive of any use for them.

CHAPTER 33

We see traces of Spainards.

When we saw sure signs of Spainards, and heard how near we were to them, we gave thanks for escaping out of a captivity so melancholy and wretched. The delight we felt let each one conjecture, when he shall remember the length of time we were in that country, the suffering and perils we underwent.

That night I entreated my companions that one of them should go back three days' journey after the Indians who were moving about over the country, where we had given assurance of protection. Neither of them received this proposal well, excusing themselves because of weariness and exhaustion; and although either might have done better than I, being more youthful and athletic, yet seeing their unwillingness, the next morning I took the negro with eleven Indians, and, following the Indians by their trail, I travelled ten leagues, passing three villages, at which they had slept.

The day after I overtook four of them on horseback, who were astonished at the sight of me, so strangely habited as I was, and in company with Indians. They stood staring at me a length of time, so confounded that they neither hailed me nor drew near to make an inquiry. I bade them take me to their chief: accordingly we went together half a league to the place where was Diego de Alcaraz, their captain.

(Note *Alcaraz later served as a lieutenant under Diaz in the Coronado expedition.*)

After we had conversed, he stated to me that he was completely undone; he had not been able in a long time to take any Indians; he knew not which way to turn, and his men had well begun to experience hunger and fatigue. I told him of Castillo and Dorantes, who were behind, ten leagues off, with a multitude that conducted us. He thereupon sent three cavalry to them, with fifty of the Indians who accompanied him. The negro returned to guide them, while I remained. I asked the Spainards to give me a certificate of the year, month, and day I arrived there, and of the manner of my coming, which they accordingly did. From this river (**Note** *Evidently the Rio Sinaloa.*) to the town of the Catholics, named San Miguel, within the government of the province called New Galicia, are thirty leagues.

CHAPTER 34

Of sending for the Spainards.

Five days having elapsed, Andrés Dorantes and Alonzo del Castillo arrived with those who had been sent after them. They brought more than six hundred persons of that community, whom the Spainards had driven into the forests, and who had wandered in concealment over the land. Those who accompanied us so far had drawn them out, and given them to the Catholics, who thereupon dismissed all the others they had brought with them. Upon their coming to where I was, Alcaraz begged that we would summon the people of the towns on the margin of the river, who straggled about under cover of the woods, and order them to fetch us something to eat.

This last was unnecessary, the Indians being ever diligent to bring us all they could. Directly we sent our messengers to call them, when there came six hundred souls, bringing us all the maize in their possession. They fetched it in certain pots, closed with clay, which they had concealed in the earth. They brought us whatever else they had; but we, wishing only to have the provision, gave the rest to the Spainards, that they might divide among themselves. After this we had many high words with them; for they wished to make slaves of the Indians we brought.

In consequence of the dispute, we left at our departure many bows of Turkish shape we had along with us and many pouches. The five arrows with the points of emerald were forgotten among others, and we lost them. We gave the Indians a store of robes of cowhide and other things we brought. We found it difficult to induce the Indians to return to their dwellings, to feel no apprehension and plant maize. They were willing to do nothing until they had gone with us and delivered us into the hands of other Indians, as had been the custom; for, if they returned without doing so, they were afraid they should die, and, going with us, they feared neither Catholics nor lances.

Our countrymen became jealous at this, and caused their interpreter to tell the Indians that we were of them, and for a long time we had been lost; that they were the lords of the land who must be obeyed and served, while we were persons of mean condition and small force. The Indians cared little or nothing for what was told them; and conversing among themselves said the Catholics lied: that we had come whence the sun rises, and they whence it goes down; we healed the sick, they killed the sound; that we had come naked and barefooted, while they had arrived in clothing and on horses with lances; that we were not covetous of anything, but all that was given to us we directly turned to give, remaining with nothing; that the others had the only purpose to rob whomsoever they found, bestowing nothing on any one.

In this way they spoke of all matters respecting us, which they enhanced by contrast with matters concerning the others, delivering their response through the interpreter of the Spaniards. To other Indians they made this known by means of one among them through whom they understood us. Those who speak that tongue we discriminately call *Primahaitu*, which is like saying *Vasconyados*. We found it in use over more than four hundred leagues of our travel, without another over that whole extent. Even to the last, I could not convince the Indians that we were of the Catholics; and only with great effort and solicitation we got them to go back to their residences. We ordered them to put away apprehension, establish their towns, plant and cultivate the soil.

From abandonment the country had already grown up thickly in trees. It is, no doubt, the best in all these Indias, the most prolific and plenteous in provisions. Three times in the year it is planted. It produces great variety of fruit, has beautiful rivers, with many other good waters. There are ores with clear traces of gold and silver. The people are well disposed: they serve such Spaniards as are their friends, with great good will. They are comely, much more so than the Mexicans. Indeed, the land needs no circumstance to make it blessed.

The Indians, at taking their leave, told us they would do what we commanded, and would build their towns, if the Spaniards would suffer them; and this I say and affirm most positively, that, if they have not done so, it is the fault of the Catholics.

After we had dismissed the Indians in peace, and thanked them for the toil they had supported with us, the Indians with subtlety sent us on our way under charge of *Zebreros*, an *alcalde*, attended by two men. They took us through forests and solitudes, to hinder us from intercourse with the natives, that we might neither witness nor have knowledge of the act they would commit. It is but an instance of how frequently men are mistaken in their aims; we set about to preserve the liberty of the Indians and thought we had secured it, but the contrary appeared; for the Catholics had arranged to go and spring upon those we had sent away in peace and confidence. They executed their plan as they had designed, taking us through the woods, wherein for two days we were lost, without water and without way. Seven of our men died of thirst, and we all thought to have perished. Many in their company were unable to reach the place where we got water the second night, until the noon of next day. We travelled twenty-five leagues, little more or less, and reached a town of friendly Indians. The *alcalde* left us there, and went on three leagues farther to a town called *Culiacan* where was *Melchior Diaz*, principal *alcalde* and captain of the province.

CHAPTER 35

The chief alcalde receives us kindly the night we arrive.

The *alcalde mayor* knew of the expedition, and, hearing of our return, he immediately left that night and came to where we were. He wept with us, giving praises for having extended over us so great care. He comforted and entertained us hospitably. In behalf of the Governor, Nuño de Guzman and himself, he tendered all that he had, and the service in his power. He showed much regret for the seizure, and the injustice we had received from Alcaraz and others. We were sure, had he been present, what was done to the Indians and to us would never have occurred.

The night being passed, we set out the next day for Anhacan. The chief alcalde besought us to tarry there, since by so doing we could be of eminent service. The deserted land was without tillage and everywhere badly wasted, the Indians were fleeing and concealing themselves in the thickets, unwilling to occupy their towns; we were to send and call them, commanding them in behalf of God and the King, to return to live in the vales and cultivate the soil.

To us this appeared difficult to effect. We had brought no native of our own, nor of those who accompanied us according to custom, intelligent in these affairs. At last we made the attempt with two captives, brought from that country, who were with the Spainards we first overtook. They had seen the people who conducted us, and learned from them the great authority and command we carried and exercised throughout those parts, the sick we had cured, and the many things besides we had done. We ordered that they, with others of the town, should go together to summon the hostile natives among the mountains and of the river Petachan, where we had found the Indians, and say to them they must come to us, that we wished to speak with them. For the protection of the messengers, and as a token to the others of our will, we gave them a gourd of those we were accustomed to bear in our hands, which had been our principal insignia and evidence of rank, and with this they went away.

The Indians were gone seven days, and returned with three chiefs of those revolted among the ridges, who brought with them fifteen men, and presented us beads, turquoises, and feathers. The messengers said they had not found the people of the river where we appeared, the Catholics having again made them run away into the mountains. Melchior Diaz told the interpreter to speak to the natives for us; to say to them we came in the name of God, who is in heaven; that we had travelled about the world many years, telling all the people we found that they should believe in God and serve Him; for He was the Master of all things on the earth, benefiting and rewarding the virtuous, and to the bad giving perpetual punishment of fire; that, when the good die, He takes them to heaven, where none ever die, nor feel cold, nor hunger, nor

thirst, nor any inconvenience whatsoever, but the greatest enjoyment possible to conceive; that those who will not believe in Him, nor obey His commands, He casts beneath the earth into the company of demons, and into a great fire which is never to go out, but always torment; that, over this, if they desired to be Catholics and serve God in the way we required, the Catholics would cherish them as brothers and behave towards them very kindly; that we would command they give no offence nor take them from their territories, but be their great friends. If the Indians did not do this, the Catholics would treat them very hardly, carrying them away as slaves into other lands.

They answered through the interpreter that they would be true Catholics and serve God. Being asked to whom they sacrifice and offer worship, from whom they ask rain for their corn-fields and health for themselves, they answered of a man that is in heaven. We inquired of them his name, and they told us Aguar; and they believed he created the whole world, and the things in it.

We returned to question them as to how they knew this; they answered their fathers and grandfathers had told them, that from distant time had come their knowledge, and they knew the rain and all good things were sent to them by him. We told them that the name of him of whom they spoke we called Dios; and if they would call him so, and would worship him as we directed, they would find their welfare. They responded that they well understood, and would do as we said.

We ordered them to come down from the mountains in confidence and peace, inhabit the whole country and construct their houses: among these they should build one for God, at its entrance place a cross like that which we had there present; and, when Catholics came among them, they should go out to receive them with crosses in their hands, without bows or any arms, and take them to their dwellings, giving of what they have to eat, and the Catholics would do them no injury, but be their friends; and the Indians told us they would do as we had commanded.

The captain having given them shawls and entertained them, they returned, taking the two captives who had been used as emissaries. This occurrence took place before the notary, in the presence of many witnesses.

CHAPTER 36

Of building churches in that land.

As soon as these Indians went back, all those of that province who were friendly to the Spainards, and had heard of us, came to visit us, bringing beads and feathers. We commanded them to build churches and put crosses in them: to that time none had been raised; and we made them bring their principal men to be baptized.

Then the captain made a covenant with God, not to invade nor consent to invasion, nor to enslave any of that country and people, to whom we had guaranteed safety; that this he would enforce and defend until your Majesty and the Governor Nuño de Guzman, or the Viceroy in your name, should direct what would be most for the service of God and your Highness.

When the children had been baptized, we departed for the town of San Miguel. So soon as we arrived, April 1, 1536, came Indians, who told us many people had come down from the mountains and were living in the vales; that they had made churches and crosses, doing all we had required. Each day we heard how these things were advancing to a full improvement.

Fifteen days of our residence having passed, Alcaraz got back with the Spainards from the incursion, and they related to the captain the manner in which the Indians had come down and peopled the plain; that the towns were inhabited which had been tenantless and deserted, the residents, coming out to receive them with crosses in their hands, had taken them to their houses, giving of what they had, and the Indians had slept among them over night. They were surprised at a thing so novel; but, as the natives said they had been assured of safety, it was ordered that they should not be harmed, and the Spainards took friendly leave of them.

God in His infinite mercy is pleased that in the days of your Majesty, under your might and dominion, these nations should come to be thoroughly and voluntarily subject to the Catholics. We regard this as certain, that your Majesty is he who is destined to do so much, not difficult to accomplish; for in the two thousand leagues we journeyed on land, and in boats on water, and in that we travelled unceasingly for ten months after coming out of captivity, we found neither sacrifices nor idolatry.

In the time, we traversed from sea to sea; and from information gathered with great diligence, there may be a distance from one to another at the widest part, of two thousand leagues; and we learned that on the coast of the South Sea there are pearls and great riches, and the best and all the most opulent countries are near there.

We were in the village of San Miguel until the fifteenth day of May 1536. The cause of so long a detention was, that from thence to the city of Compostela, where the Governor Nuño de Guzman resided, are a hundred leagues of country, entirely devastated and filled with enemies, where it was necessary we should have protection. Twenty mounted men went with us for forty leagues, and after that six Spainards accompanied us, who had with them five hundred slaves. Arrived at Compostela, the Governor entertained us graciously and gave us of his clothing for our use. I could not wear any for some time, nor could we sleep anywhere else but on the ground. After ten or twelve days we left for Mexico, and were all along on the way well entertained by Spainards. Many came out on the roads to gaze at us. We arrived at Mexico on Sunday, the day before the vespers of Saint Iago, (**Note** *The day of Saint James the Apostle—July 25, 1536.*) where we were handsomely treated by the Viceroy and the Marquis del Valle, (**Note** *The Viceroy Mendoza*) and welcomed, with joy. They gave us clothing and proffered whatsoever they had. On the day of Saint Iago was a celebration, and a joust of reeds with bulls.



Governor Nuño de Guzman

CHAPTER 37

Of what occurred when I wished to return.

When we had rested two months in Mexico, I desired to return to these kingdoms; (Spain) and being about to embark in the month of October, a storm came on, capsizing the ship, and she was lost. In consequence I resolved to remain through the winter; because in those parts it is a boisterous season for navigation. After that had gone by, Dorantes and I left Mexico, about Lent, to take shipping at Vera Cruz. We remained waiting for a wind until Palm Sunday, when we went on board, and were detained fifteen days longer for a wind. The ship leaked so much that I quitted her, and went to one of two other vessels that were ready to sail, but Dorantes remained in her.

On the tenth day of April, 1537 the three ships left the port, and sailed one hundred and fifty leagues. Two of them leaked a great deal; and one night the vessel I was in lost their company. Their pilots and masters, as afterwards appeared, dared not proceed with the other vessels so, and without telling us of their intentions, or letting us know aught of them, put back to the port they had left. We pursued our voyage, and on the fourth day of May we entered the harbor of Havana, in the island of Cuba. We remained waiting for the other vessels, believing them to be on their way, until the second of June, when we sailed, in much fear of falling in with Frenchmen, as they had a few days before taken three Spanish vessels. Having arrived at the island of Bermuda, we were struck by one of those storms that overtake those who pass there, according to what they state who sail thither. All one night we considered ourselves lost; and we were thankful that when morning was come, the storm ceased, and we could go on our course.

At the end of twenty-nine days after our departure from Havana, we had sailed eleven hundred leagues, which are said to be thence to the town of the Azores. The next morning, passing by the island called Cuervo, we fell in with a French ship. At noon she began to follow, bringing with her a caravel captured from the Portuguese, and gave us chase. In the evening we saw nine other sail; but they were so distant we could not make out whether they were Portuguese or of those that pursued us. At night the Frenchman was within shot of a lombard from our ship, and we stole away from our course in the dark to evade him, and this we did three or four times. He approached so near that he saw us and fired. He might have taken us, or, at his option could leave us until the morning. I remember with gratitude when the sun rose, and we found ourselves close with the Frenchman, that near us were the nine sail we saw the evening before, which we now recognized to be of the fleet of Portugal. The Frenchman, so soon as he discovered their character, let go the caravel he had seized with a cargo of negroes and kept as a prize, to make us think he was Portuguese, that we might wait for him.

When he cast her off, he told the pilot and the master of her, that we were French and under his convoy. This said, sixty oars were put out from his ship, and thus with these and sail he commenced to flee, moving so fast it was hardly credible. The caravel being let go, went to the galleon, and informed the commander that the other ship and ours were French. As we drew nigh the galleon, and the fleet saw we were coming down upon them, they made no doubt we were, and putting themselves in order of battle, bore up for us, and when near we hailed them. Discovering that we were friends, they found that they were mocked in permitting the corsair to escape, by being told that we were French and of his company.

Four caravels were sent in pursuit. The galleon drawing near, after the salutation from us, the commander, Diego de Silveira, asked whence we came and what merchandise we carried, when we answered that we came from New Spain, and were loaded with silver and gold. He asked us how much there might be; the captain told him we carried three thousand castellanos. The commander replied: "In honest truth you come very rich, although you bring a very sorry ship and a still poorer artillery. By Heaven, that renegade whore-son Frenchman has lost a good mouthful. Now that you have escaped, follow me, and do not leave me that I may deliver you in Spain."

After a little time, the caravels that pursued the Frenchman returned, for plainly he moved too fast for them; they did not like either, to leave the fleet, which was guarding three ships that came laden with spices. Thus we reached the island of Terceira, where we reposed fifteen days, taking refreshment and awaiting the arrival of another ship coming with a cargo from India, the companion of the three of which the armada was in charge. The time having run out, we left that place with the fleet, and arrived at the port of Lisbon on the ninth of August, on the vespers of the day of our master Saint Lawrence, in the year one thousand five hundred and thirty-seven.

That what I have stated in my foregoing narrative is true, I subscribe with my name.

Cabeza de Vaca.

The narrative here ended is signed with his name and arms.

CHAPTER 38

Of what became of the others who went to Indias.

Since giving this circumstantial account of events attending the voyage to Florida, the invasion, and our going out thence until the arrival in these realms, I desire to state what became of the ships and of the people who remained with them. I have not before touched on this, as we were uninformed until coming to New Spain, where we found many of the persons, and others here in Castile, from whom we learned everything to the latest particular.

At the time we left, one of the ships had already been lost on the breakers, and the three others were in considerable danger, having nearly a hundred souls on board and few stores. Among the persons were ten married women, one of whom had told the Governor many things that afterwards befell him on the voyage. She cautioned him before he went inland not to go, as she was confident that neither he nor any going with him could ever escape; but should any one come back from that country, the Almighty must work great wonders in his behalf, though she believed few or none would return. The Governor said that he and his followers were going to fight and conquer nations and countries wholly unknown, and in subduing them he knew that many would be slain; nevertheless, that those who survived would be fortunate, since from what he had understood of the opulence of that land, they must become very rich. And further he begged her to inform him whence she learned those things that had passed, as well as those she spoke of, that were to come; she replied that in Castile a Moorish woman of Hornachos had told them to her, which she had stated to us likewise before we left Spain, and while on the passage many things happened in the way she foretold.

After the Governor had made Caravallo, a native of Cuenca de Huete, his lieutenant and commander of the vessels and people, he departed, leaving orders that all diligence should be used to repair on board, and take the direct course to Pánuco, keeping along the shore closely examining for the harbor, and having found it, the vessels should enter there and await our arrival. And the people state, that when they had betaken themselves to the ships, all of them looking at that woman, they distinctly heard her say to the females, that well, since their husbands had gone inland, putting their persons in so great jeopardy, their wives should in no way take more account of them, but ought soon to be looking after whom they would marry, and that she should do so. She did accordingly: she and others married, or became the concubines of those who remained in the ships. After we left, the vessels made sail, taking their course onward; but not finding the harbor, they returned. Five leagues below the place at which we debarked, they found the port, the same we discovered when we saw the Spanish cases containing dead bodies, which were of Catholics.

Into this haven and along this coast, the three ships passed with the other ship that came from Cuba, and the brigantine, looking for us nearly a year, and not finding us, they went to New Spain. The port of which we speak is the best in the world. At the entrance are six fathoms of water and five near the shore. It runs up into the land seven or eight leagues. The bottom is fine white sand. No sea breaks upon it nor boisterous storm, and it can contain many vessels. Fish is in great plenty. There are a hundred leagues to Havana, a town of Catholics in Cuba, with which it bears north and south. The north-east wind ever prevails and vessels go from one to the other, returning in a few days; for the reason that they sail either way with it on the quarter. As I have given account of the vessels, it may be well that I state who are, and from what parts of these kingdoms come.

The first is Alonzo del Castillo Maldonado, native of Salamanca, son of Doctor Castillo and Doña Aldonça Maldonado.

The second is Andrés Dorantes, son of Pablo Dorantes, native of Béjar, and citizen of Gibráleon.

The third is Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, son of Francisco de Vera, and grandson of Pedro de Vera who conquered the Canaries, and his mother was Doña Tereça Cabeza de Vaca, native of Xeréz de la Frontera.

The fourth, called Estevanico, is an Arabian black, native of Açamor.

The End

The present tract was imprinted in the very magnificent, noble and very ancient City of Zamora, by the honored residents Augustin de Paz and Juan Picardo, partners, printers of books, at the cost and outlay of the virtuous Juan Pedro Musetti, book merchant of Medina del Campo, having been finished the sixth day of the month of October, in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-two.



About the Author

Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.

As a wrangler on the “Great American Horse Drive”, at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.

His book, “The Oldest Greenhorn”, chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the “Gate-to-Gate” trophy belt buckle the hard way.



Other books published by Larry W Jones:

A Squirrel Named Julie and The Fox Ridge Fox
The Painting Of A Dream
The Boy With Green Thumbs and The Wild Tree Man
Red Cloud – Chief Of the Sioux
Spotted Tail – The Orphan Negotiator
Little Crow – The Fur Trapper's Patron
Chief Gall – The Strategist
Crazy Horse – The Vision Quest Warrior
Sitting Bull - The Powder River Power
Rain-In-The-Face – The Setting Sun Brave
Two Strike – The Lakota Club Fighter
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Chief Joseph – Retreat From Grande Ronde
The Oregon Trail Orphans
Kids In Bloom Volume 1
Kids In Bloom Volume 2
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The Jungle Book – Tiger! Tiger!
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Courthouses Of Texas
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